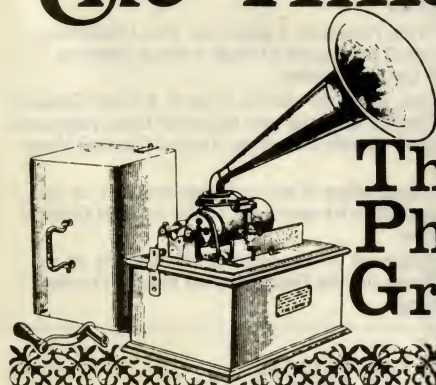


The Hillandale News



The official journal of the
**The City of London
Phonograph and
Gramophone Society**
inaugurated 1919

NO. 95

APRIL, 1977



Colonel Gouraud's first message to Nelson

SOCIETY RULES

1. That the Society shall be called THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND that its objects shall be the social intercourse of its members and study of sound reproducing apparatus, as well as its application.
2. That the Officers of the Society shall consist of a President, Secretary, Financial Treasurer and Meetings Secretary, who shall meet in October, and who shall be ex-officio members of the Society.
3. That the management of the Society be vested in a Committee Meeting, and with power to co-opt, and that its duties shall be to carry out the objects of the Society. Written notice must be given to the Secretary of any resolution proposing to amend these rules.
4. New members (ladies or gentlemen) may be elected on the next meeting of the Society on the payment of an annual subscription Meeting, which is renewable twelve calendar months thereafter.
5. The financial Treasurer shall, once in every year, submit a statement to the Auditor elected by the Society and shall furnish a Balance Sheet for the inspection of members at each Annual General Meeting.

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Overseas members are requested to send STERLING DRAFTS or banknotes, as check clearances here carry a high commission rate. The Society no longer operates within the Post Office Giro system. New Zealand and Australian Postal Orders are acceptable in the U.K. To save postage in mailing receipts, these are sent out with the goods or next magazine to members. PLEASE MAKE OUT ALL CHECKS AND DRAFTS PAYABLE TO "THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY".

MEETINGS are held at the "John Snow" Public House, Broadwick Street, Soho, London, W.1, on the first MONDAY of every month commencing at 7.00 p.m. In addition, regular meetings are held at the following centres:

HEREFORD. Details from the Secretary, D.G. Watson, [redacted] Tupsley, Hereford.

MIDLANDS. Details from the Secretary, P. Bennett, [redacted] Goldthorn Park, Wolverhampton, Staffs, WV4 5DE. Phone: [redacted].

MANCHESTER. Details from the Secretary, Clive Thompson, [redacted], Mosley Common, Worsley, Lancs.

VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA. Details from C. Gracie, [redacted] Cavendish, Victoria 3408, Australia.

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND. Details from the Secretary, Herr W. Schenker, [redacted], Zurich, Switzerland.

MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE that all money should now be sent to our Treasurer, B.A. Williamson, [redacted] Liverpool, L16 1LA.

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

I have remarked before in these pages on my inefficiency in sending copy to the Editor on time, and my tardiness in this respect has now reaped its just deserts, for as a result of leaving the December "Chairman's Chat" to the last minute and sending it off as soon as it was written in order to meet the deadline, I failed to see what I had written, as it might appear to readers. I refer to the second paragraph, wherein I made some comments about the refusal of a Sterling cheque in America.

Now, apart from exhortations to members to help their Society in this way or that, I regard the Chairman's Chat column as a vehicle for a little light relief, by the relation of odd occurrences or idle thoughts, which may not even be directly related to phonograph collecting. In the present case, a line of whimsical thought, slightly tongue-in-cheek, was sparked off by an insignificant event at my office, which had nothing to do with the Society, but I very much regret that in cutting out what would have been tedious details and condensing all into a sentence or two, I wrote what some may feel was a rather offensive complaint against an American member. I would like to assure all members that this was not my intention, and that no insult was over offered to me in any capacity, much less as representing the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society. I had intended to make this clear in the last sentence of the December 'Chat', but I fear it was badly expressed.

I had intended to write a note here about the recent increased consumption of instant porridge among some of our members, but I now gather that another pen has beaten me to it, and I will simply say that I have seen one of these cardboard Trade-Mark gramophones, and the designer really has allowed himself more than his fair share of artistic licence. Even so, if you go in for knick-knacks like Goss gramophones and miniature horn gramophones with transistor radio innards, then you should surely try and add a Porridge Model to your collection. Many 'serious' collections are enhanced by amusing sidelines of this nature.

The Society's Centenary Exhibition, to be held at the British Institute of Recorded Sound from August 13th — 27th, will call for a goodly amount of volunteer help. I would be very pleased to hear from anyone who might be prepared to put in some time manning the show, and also from anyone who might be able to find us some glass showcases.

ANSWERING HIS MASTER'S VOICE!

by Sydney H. Carter

"I say, George, I've got a little dog that can answer questions."

"Go on with you, I'm sure he cannot."

"Well, you listen to this."

"Caesar, come and sit down here and look at me. Now, what is the poetical name for a sailing ship?"

"Barque."

"Quite right. Now, what is outside the trunk on most trees?"

"Bark."

"Right again — clever dog!"

"But he didn't really answer you."

Caesar — "Did I say something wrong, Master?"

Astounding!

Yes, he's a good little dog.

Feb. 1977

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF COLONEL GEORGE GOURAUD

INTRODUCTION

In the last issue of this magazine I wrote an introduction to a contemporary account of the activities of Colonel Gouraud at his South London home 'Little Menlo' in the late 1880s, and promised that a further paper was to hand on this colourful gentleman. In fact there are two papers, one of which follows below, and the second will appear in the next issue; this deals with Gouraud's sponsorship of Short's compressed air sound amplifier, and in a third paper we will leave Gouraud and follow Horace Short's dealings with Sir Charles Parsons, which led to the marketing of the 'Auxeto-Gramophone' in the mid-Edwardian decade.

These three papers have been prepared by Gordon Bruce, Company Secretary to the Belfast aircraft and marine engineers, Short Brothers and Harland, Ltd., and are really superb examples of original research, with a presentation and annotation that makes them very readable; the Society is grateful to him for allowing us to use them, and I add my personal thanks for an enjoyable correspondence.

Aircraft constructors and shipbuilders are on the point of being nationalised by the Government, but the names of the pioneers in these industries — and for that matter any other — should be kept in front of us to remind us of what the Country has done and could be done again, given the encouragement. This trio of monographs together form part of a whole which is a little outside the Society's scope, and show that there are still positive things being done in Northern Ireland in trade and industry and in research, and the Society was lucky in being able to assist in a small way by giving Mr Bruce one or two pointers. One led him to Charles Cox, who worked for Colonel Gouraud three quarters of a century ago, and whose mind, from Mr. Bruce's account of their meeting, is still as clear as a

bell; Charles Cox's personal memories of Colonel Gouraud were published nine years ago in HILLANDALE NEWS No. 44, as well as the accompanying photograph of Colonel Gouraud in uniform.

The quality of the matter in these articles promises well for the Centenary Year.

GEORGE FROW

COLONEL GEORGE EDWARD GOURAUD (1)

Congressional Medal of Honor

U.S. Army (Retired) by GORDON BRUCE

George Edward Gouraud was born a United States citizen circa 1842 at Niagara Falls, New York State (2). He was the senior member of an old French family which, over the years, had produced many cavalry soldiers. A later member of the family was Military Governor of Paris during the First World War (3). Gouraud did not trace the members of the French branch of his family until about 1900 at which time he also referred to himself as:

"a Yankee cavalry officer who had English blood in his veins"(4).

Information on Gouraud's English ancestry has not been traced but he was specific in describing his father as a Frenchman who had died when Gouraud himself was only five years old (5).

Gouraud's own military career appears to have started in the American Civil War when he volunteered for the Federal Army. On his own account he was promoted sergeant in a few days, orderly sergeant within a week, sergeant major in six months and, a few weeks later, attained commissioned rank (6). Although he served at one time on the staff of General Sherman, Gouraud saw front line service and won the Congressional Medal of Honor (the U.S. equivalent of the



In October 1893 Colonel Gouraud was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour relating to incidents in the American Civil War 29 years earlier, and he once again donned his uniform for this photograph.

Victoria Cross). The medal itself was not awarded until 1893 when military despatches of the Civil War period were fully examined and it became evident that Gouraud had distinguished himself in at least two separate actions. A local London newspaper reported:

"It was at the battle of Honey Hill, South Carolina, fought on November 20th, 1864, that Colonel Gouraud won his medal.....Colonel Gouraud was at that time a captain of cavalry, and aide-de-camp to General Stone in command. His promotion thus far had been won by various deeds of valour. At Ball's Bluff, a lad of 19, he rescued a fallen comrade under heavy fire within 30 yards of the enemy's ranks. He carried him off mounted behind him. His passage being challenged by a Confederate mounted cavalry-

man, Gouraud brought him too, with his horse, prisoners within the Union lines. At Honey Hill, Gouraud, then aide-de-camp to General Foster, rode by the side of General Hartwell, commanding the coloured brigade of Massachusetts infantry, and led a bayonet charge upon a strong position of the enemy. General Hartwell fell pierced by three bullets. Every officer of his staff was either killed, wounded, or unhorsed. Gouraud, remaining the only mounted officer, rallied and re-formed the brigade, holding his position and the enemy in check until reinforced and relieved. (7).

Gouraud was later to ornament his London house with the sabre and pistols which he had used in action(8).

Clearly, as one newspaper put it, Gouraud was "no carpet Colonel" (9) but the view of a contemporary in 1893 that:

"Colonel Gouraud has now made his helmet a hive for bees and shouts the word of command only into the phonograph."

was to prove wrong in part at least (7).

It appears that it was during the Civil War that Gouraud first met the inventor Thomas Alva Edison (the standard biographies of Edison, however, date that meeting to 1873 when Edison visited London (10)). According to "An old Friend of the Colonel" and to Charles Cox who once worked with Gouraud as an apprentice, the meeting took place during a winter campaign when the Federal and Confederate armies were encamped on each side of the Potomac River. Snow and frost had prevented all military activity, apart from occasional raids by the Confederates, but the Federals were nevertheless required to maintain preparedness. One night Gouraud could get no intelligent reply from a certain telegraphy post and therefore set off to investigate. On arrival he found that the operator was asleep under a rug and that an automatic repeating device, attached to the transmitter, was ticking out the message "All's Well" at regular intervals. The operator introduced himself to an irate Gouraud as Thomas Edison and explained that, tired of being woken up every few hours to make the same reply, he had installed the automatic equipment (11).

The same "Old Friend" also reported that Gouraud met Edison again after the war and, finding that Edison required funds to develop his inventions, used his influential connections to find the requisite finances. Other sources indicate that the financier

brought in by Gouraud was George Harrington, a former Assistant Secretary of the United States Treasury and reputed financial agent of Jay Gould "the destroying angel of Wall Street". (Gould, in the course of his questionable career had attempted to corner the United States' railways, telegraph systems and gold supplies). It appears that Gouraud himself had, at one time, also been an officer in the U.S. Treasury (12).

Edison's telegraph inventions were marketed by the Harrington/Gould Automatic Telegraph Company and Gouraud was appointed its London representative. When the United Kingdom's General Post Office agreed to view a demonstration of the Edison system, Edison himself was despatched to London to back up Gouraud. The visit was not auspicious – the Edison system was not immediately adopted by the GPO and Gouraud disgraced himself when – overcome by the dirty surroundings and foul tasting food and drink – he fainted in a dockside tavern at Greenwich to be revived by large drafts of gin administered by Edison (12).

Edison and Gouraud were next associated in the introduction of the Edison telephone system into the United Kingdom in competition with the rival Bell system. In 1879 it fell to Gouraud – by now domiciled in Great Britain and described as Edison's promoter, publicist and benefactor and as London representative of various American banking groups – to use his contacts among British capitalists to form the Edison Telephone Company with a capital of £100,000. Gouraud, a director of the new Company, was responsible for the organisation of demonstrations of Edison's telephone. Among the notables who succumbed to Gouraud's charms as a public relations man and "boomer" and used the new instrument were the Prince of Wales and Mr and Mrs Gladstone. In due course Gouraud purchased Edison's personal interest in the invention for £30,000 (13).

When the Edison system went into commercial operation, having been redesigned by Edison at short notice to avoid conflict with the Bell patents, one of the Company's employees was a twenty-three year old Irishman named George Bernard Shaw (not yet famous!) who was employed as a demonstrator and lecturer on the new device. Competition with the rival Bell system soon developed to the point that merger became the only logical answer. The Bell and Edison companies, accordingly amalgamated in June 1880 as the United Telephone Company with a capital of £500,000 – Gouraud retaining his directorship. United, in turn, became part of the National Telephone

Company in 1889. National was one of the private companies which were nationalised by the GPO in 1912. Today's telephone system can, therefore, be said to be one of Gouraud's memorials (13).

Soon after setting up the telephone enterprise, Gouraud turned to yet another branch of Edison's expertise – this time the generation of electricity for public supply. The Holborn Viaduct power station – opened in 1882 – was established through Gouraud's agency and, using an Edison "Jumbo" dynamo, provided power for street lighting and private use in the general area of the Viaduct, Old Bailey and Newgate Street. Among private consumers were the General Post Office and the City Temple (probably the first church to have electric light) (14).

A fourth venture in which Edison and Gouraud were involved was the introduction of the Edison phonograph into the United Kingdom. As early as January 1878, on receiving the first news of Edison's invention of the phonograph, Gouraud had undertaken to promote a Company in England and to raise the capital for its exploitation. This early type of phonograph – which recorded on tinfoil – was made available in the United Kingdom in small numbers but it was not until 1888 that Edison was sufficiently satisfied with the progress of his invention – by now recording on wax cylinders – to launch it fully on to the market. Gouraud arranged the first demonstration of the improved phonograph in the United Kingdom. Contemporary newspaper reports in June 1888 have it that Gouraud gave the first demonstration at his home ("Little Menlo", Beulah Hill, Upper Norwood, London) and that the second (and first public demonstration) was given on 29 June 1888 in the Press Gallery of the nearby Crystal Palace during the Handel Festival.

Gladstone and the Earl of Aberdeen were reported among the notables who attended the public demonstration and heard a message recorded by Edison for the British people, a "phonograph Letter" – or "Phonogram" – (the first of its kind) addressed by Edison to "Friend Gouraud" together with numerous musical items provided by Edison (15).

Gouraud was responsible for at least two other major demonstrations of the Edison phonograph (battery powered) at a meeting of the British association at Bath. Concurrently the rival Bell "Graphophone" was demonstrated. Both instruments had been designed for use with hearing tubes but Gouraud was able to use some sort of horn as an amplifier thus

providing the classic pattern of phonograph which penetrated the domestic entertainment market in the late 1800's and early 1900's (16). The second demonstration came in November when Gouraud delivered a long illustrated lecture to the Royal Society of Arts (14).

Having launched the phonograph, Gouraud set about recording the voices of the famous for posterity in his "library of immortal voices". Among those whose voices found a place in Gouraud's archive were Queen Alexandra, Gladstone, Lord Salisbury, Sir Robert Browning, Lord Tennyson, Sir Arthur Sullivan, Bismarck, Moltke, King Humbert I of Italy, Edison and Gouraud himself. So large did Gouraud's collection become that, during Gouraud's later days in Brighton, part of his house wall had to be knocked down to admit the safe in which the records were to be housed. The archive was publicised in 1931 when a group of Edison's and Gouraud's friends assembled at the home of Mrs R. Courtney Gayer, the Colonel's daughter, to hear the wax cylinders played on contemporary equipment (17). The collection is now in the safe keeping of the British Broadcasting Corporation (14).

During the phonograph stage of his career, Gouraud was described as a "handsome, clever and genial man, six foot one inch in height and splendidly built" living in "his beautiful home on Beulah Hill, where, in the midst of trees and flowers, he lives an ideal life, in the company of a clever, pretty, and sympathetic wife and a numerous family. He is devoted to Edison, and Edison owes more to him than the world is aware of." (9).

One of Edison's earlier inventions which did not have the immediate success of the phonograph but which now occupies an even greater place in everyday life is that of the vacuum sealing of food. Francis Jehl, one of Edison's assistants at Menlo Park (Edison's laboratory after which Gouraud named his Upper Norwood house), has recorded that, in late 1880, Gouraud asked Edison to find a way of sending fresh meat to England. After experiment Edison devised a method of searing the outside of the meat in a flame and then sealing it in a vacuum jar. It fell to Gouraud to carry Edison's first vacuum-packed meat to England, but, on arrival, neither he nor his secretary, Samuel Insull, felt inclined to sample Edison's porterhouse steak. Edison nevertheless patented the principle in December 1880: the reluctance exhibited by both Gouraud and Insull does not appear to have affected their relationship with Edison for Insull was later appointed Edison's own secretary and eventually

became a major figure in the United States electrical generation industry (18).

Gouraud's obituarist records that he accompanied Li Hung Chang on his world tour. This episode in Gouraud's life will require further examination to ascertain whether or not his interests were political or commercial. Li Hung Chang was a Viceroy to the last Empress of China — a soldier statesman whose particular interest was in westernising China: to him has been attributed the introduction of railways, telegraphs and steam navigation into China. He is also credited to have been an expert on western armaments. Li Hung Chang is known to have been in England in 1896 and to have visited the United States and Russia at about that time. His visit to England included inspection of the Armstrong armaments works on Tyneside (19).

Gouraud's career as a promoter of promising inventions was continued in the late 1890's and early 1900's by his association with Horace L. Short who, in 1908, joined his brothers Eustace and Oswald to form a partnership for the manufacture of heavier-than-air aircraft. The details of that association are dealt with separately in the paper "The Short Brothers and Colonel George E. Gouraud" which shows that the laboratories financed by Gouraud for Horace Short at Brighton and Hove were also used by Eustace and Oswald to found the business of manufacturing passenger-carrying balloons which they pursued for about seven years before Horace joined forces with them (20).

What is significant in industrial terms about Gouraud's connection with Brighton and Hove is that Menlo Laboratory — as the Hove establishment was known — was a deliberate effort by Gouraud to establish in the United Kingdom an Edison-style inventions factory. Apart from the "Gouraudphone" sound amplifier there are references to work with phonographs, dangerous chemical experiments and to the "Gouraud loco-motor car". These activities (and those of Eustace and Oswald Short with conventional and high altitude balloons) appear to be a hitherto unnoticed bridge between the Industrial Revolutions of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (21).

Gouraud left "Little Menlo" at Beulah Hill in 1898 to live first in Palace Gardens Kensington and then in the Brighton area variously at Gwydyr Mansions, Hove and at "Edisonia", King's Cliff, Brighton (22).

The Brighton and Hove laboratories were closed by Gouraud by October 1903 (and possibly as early as 1902) (23). Thereafter Gouraud appears to have devoted himself to international and local politics. In about 1904 M. Jacques Lebaudy (a member of a wealthy French sugar-refining family) proclaimed a "ready-made" empire in the Sahara Desert and appointed Gouraud its Governor-General. Gouraud established himself at the Savoy Hotel with other members of Lebaudy's "Court" and found himself fulfilling the roles of Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chancellor of the Exchequer. In between times Gouraud found time to design both a flag for the new empire and his own personal standard. As Governor-General, Gouraud had responsibility for the Empire's military affairs: It was reported that he had been charged with raising two cavalry units for his Emperor's Life Guards from among the local Arabs and Saharans – the first to be officered by former Rough Riders of the US Army and the second by retired officers and NCO's of the 17th Lancers and of the Royal Horse Artillery. Additionally, there was to be a Saharan constabulary organised on the lines of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and composed of American negroes (24). (A flashback to the action at Honey Hill?).

Disappointed in international politics Gouraud turned to the local politics of Brighton and stood for Brighton Town Council. He conducted his campaign by means of phonographs fastened to bath chairs (the forerunner of the election loudspeaker van?) and, in this way, gained wide publicity for his election address which promised various radical reforms for the town (25).

Throughout his life Gouraud was an ardent Anglophile and the outbreak of the Boer War gave him opportunity for practical expression of his views. His offer to raise an irregular corps for service in South Africa was turned down (he had asked for command of the unit) but he found outlet for his energies in patriotic fund-raising. Charles S. Cox, one of the apprentices at the Hove laboratory, has related that Gouraud borrowed a side-drum from the Coldstream Guards and had exact copies made as outsize collecting boxes which Oswald Short painted and decorated to match the original. Gouraud then contacted his friend Rudyard Kipling (then living at Rottingdean) who provided the following verse to be pasted on to the drums:

"Beat the Drum, Beat the Drum.
With the coin you've got to spare,

That our braves at the front the better may fare;
Beat the Drum, Beat the Drum,
Till its echo resounds
Wherever Queen's Khaki in battle is found.
Beat, beat, beat, with a patriotic heat
Till new laurels we lay at Victoria's feet.
God save the Queen." (26).

Following the Relief of Mafeking, Gouraud arranged for message of congratulation to be recorded on phonograph cylinders and despatched them, with a phonograph, to Baden Powell. One of the messages carried a verse inspired by Gouraud and backed up by the roaring of lions:

"The Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes,
For their honour we gladly die,
One God, One Blood, Two Flags,
Long may they wave on high.
God save the Queen."

Cox recalled that the lions were recorded at the London Hippodrome where a troupe called the Eight Lancashire Lads was playing and that the smallest of those Lads was a certain Charlie Chaplin (26).

Colonel Gouraud's family consisted of a daughter and three sons (Jackson, Bayard and Powers). Jackson (the eldest) lived in the United States but visited his father on occasion. Bayard (born 1870) followed his father's footsteps as an Anglophile, joined the Army and was commissioned through Sandhurst into the 17th Lancers in 1901 (17th Lancers were to have provided officers for the Colonel's Saharan Presidential Guard). Bayard served in South Africa against the Boers (Orange Free State, Transvaal and Cape Colony) and later transferred to India: he died at Aden in February 1912 (27).

Gouraud became a well known character during his stay in Brighton: his tall, white-haired distinguished figure was striking enough but his eccentricities made him even more remarkable (he was, for example, famous as a frequent litigant in Brighton County Court – where he had an unfortunate reputation for "dunning" local tradesmen – and as leader of an entourage of secretaries, assistants, etc. – "Gouraud's army" as it was known – which accompanied him everywhere). Gouraud appears to have left Brighton for Paris in about 1910 and he died – a few days after Bayard – at Vevey, Switzerland, on 17 February 1912 at the age of 70 (28).

For all his eccentricities and flamboyance,

Colonel George Edward Gouraud deserves to be remembered as a promoter in the United Kingdom of the Edison versions of electrical generation, telegraph, telephone and phonograph – inventions which not only revolutionised communications and entertainment but which, more than any others, brought the late Victorian Industrial Revolution into ordinary homes. Moreover, by financing Horace Short and by providing premises where the brothers built their first balloons, Colonel Gouraud can be regarded as one of those who made possible the development of aviation in the Industrial Revolution of the Twentieth Century.

NOTES AND REFERENCES RE. COLONEL GEORGE EDWARD GOURAUD.

- (1) The objective of these notes is not to present an exhaustive biography of Gouraud but simply to indicate the measure of a man who played a significant part in the early business life of the Short brothers. Gouraud is worthy of a more extensive biography covering in particular the industrial significance of his endeavour to establish an Edison-style "inventions factory" at Menlo Laboratory, Hove.
- (2) Hillandale News No 44 August 1968 (Magazine of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society) and obituary Brighton Gazette 21 February 1912. Sydenham Gazette 21 October 1893 gives supplementary dating from Gouraud's age of 19 at the Battle of Balls Bluff (21 October 1861).
- (3) Letter to The Times 21 October 1931 from "An old Friend of Colonel Gouraud" quoted Hillandale News No 44.
- (4) Shoreham and Southwick District Gazette 1 September 1900.
- (5) Brighton Herald 1 September 1900.
- (6) Obituary, Brighton Gazette 24 February 1912.
- (7) Sydenham Gazette 21 October 1893.
- (8) Hillandale News No 44 and Croydon Advertiser and Surrey County Reporter 4 August 1888.
- (9) Croydon etc. Reporter 4 August 1888.
- (10) eg "Edison", Matthew Josephson, Eyre & Spottiswoode 1961
"Menlo Park Reminiscences", Francis Jehl, Vol 1, Edison Institute 1937.
"Thomas A Edison" F T Miller Stanley, Paul & Co 1932.
"Edison", Dyer & Martin, Vol 1, Harper Bros. 1910.
- (11) The Times 21 October 1931 and Hillandale News No 44.
- (12) Josephson; Dyer and Martin.
- (13) Josephson.
Miller.
Dyer and Martin.
"History of the Telephone in the United Kingdom" F G C Baldwin, Chapman and Hall, 1925.
"The Story of the Telephone" J H Robertson, Pitman 1947.
- (14) Information from Mr Bennett P Maxwell.
- (15) Josephson.
Miller.
The Norwood News 30 June 1888 *
The Illustrated London News 14 July 1888 *
Norwood News and Crystal Palace Chronicle 30 June 1888 *
"Talking Machines" V K Chew, Science Museum 1967.
(* Mr Bennett P Maxwell has examined these contemporary accounts critically in the light of independent sources of information. He counsels that they be treated with some reserve in that they show signs of "planted" publicity).
- (16) Chew.
- (17) Josephson: Obituary Brighton Gazette: Talking Machine Review March 1912: Hillandale News No 44.
- (18) Jehl Vol II; Dyer and Martin.
- (19) Brighton Herald 29 December 1900.
Brighton Gazette 24 February 1912.
Imperial China: Schurmann and Schell, Pelican 1967.
The Paper Dragon: John Selby, Arthur Barker 1968.
Dragon Empress: Marina Warner, Weidenfelt and Nicolson 1972.
- (20) There were three Gouraud/Short laboratories:
 - (i) No 55 Gray Street, London SE1 (mentioned by HOS in Gasbag and by Charles Cox in Hillandale News No 44: identified from the Rate Books of St George the Martyr as being changeable to Gouraud

as at October 1899 and April 1900. (Information from London Borough of Southwark Library).

- (ii) Fulking Grange on the North Downs above Brighton (mentioned by Charles Cox in Hillandale News No 44: identified from the reminiscences of Albert Lambourne in the Brighton and Hove Gazette 9 September 1950. This laboratory may well have been occupied for the winter season 1899/1900 only.
- (iii) No 2 Hove Park Villas, Hove (mentioned by HOS in Gasbag and by Charles Cox in Hillandale News No 44): identified from the action *Smale v Gouraud* in Brighton County Court 1900 – see Note 21 below. This laboratory was first occupied in February/March 1900.

- (21) The activities of Menlo Laboratory may be reconstructed from newspaper reports of *Smale v Gouraud* which also indicate Gouraud's natural ebullience viz *Shoreham etc Gazette* 25 August, 1 September and 22 September 1900 and *Brighton Herald* 25 August, 1 and 22 September 1900. Also *Brighton Herald* 1 September 1900 for four items on the "Gouraudphone" and 8 September 1900 for Gouraud's letter thereon. See too HOS Gasbag and Cox Hillandale News No 44. Further, a letter to SBH from the Patent Office on 25 November 1975 advised that H L Short made the following patent applications jointly with C E Gouraud in 1900:

No.	Date	Title
13526/00	27 July 1900	Improved means applicable for use in locating the source of sounds which occur in the working of machinery and in detecting the mechanical defects which occasion such sounds.

No.	Date	Title
14203/00	8 August 1900	Improvements for recording, reproducing and transmitting sounds.
14204/00	8 August 1900	Improved means applicable for use in recording and reproducing sounds.
14712/00	16 August 1900	Improvements in apparatus for recording, reproducing and transmitting sounds.
and one on an apparently unrelated subject matter		
14205/00	8 August 1900	Improvements in Oil Feeders.

These Applications can reasonably be dated to the Hove period.

The high altitude research balloon activity is evidenced by Eustace's letter 22 March 1902 to the (Royal) Aeronautical Society (RAeS archives) that he had invented a balloon capable of making scientific observations at an altitude of 15 miles. This is the first known reference to the balloon project which was the subject of Eustace's and Horace's lecture to the (Royal) Aeronautical Society on 12 July 1904. (*Aeronautical Journal* October 1904).

Concurrently Oswald Short designed at Hove "an instrument for accurately timing a motor car's speed and also an instrument for ascertaining the drift and direction of a balloon in relation to the ground." (HOS: Hurren manuscript).

- (22) Letter from Borough of Croydon Library letter 25 November 1975; obituary, *Brighton Gazette*; *Brighton Herald* 1 September 1900. The bungalow "Little Menlo" at 14 Tongdean Lane, Brighton, presents something of a mystery. The Brighton Library Service has reported that the land upon which it is built was purchased from Curwen Estates in 1920 and that "Little Menlo" post-dates that event. Solicitors dealing with the property have reported that the Colonel's name does not appear on the title deeds. The name "Little Menlo" does, however,

suggest an association with someone in the Edison/Gouraud circle.

- (23) Charles Cox (Hillandale News No 44) gives 1902; a letter dated 22 March 1902 from Eustace Short to the (Royal) Aeronautical Society carries the text "Factory and Laboratories: Brighton"; Oswald Short writing in Gasbag, April 1918, dated closure before receipt of the brothers' Government of India order – itself datable by the Balloon Construction Records to October 1903; the laboratory had certainly been closed by 13 May 1904 when Parsons demonstrated his Auxetophone to the Royal Society.
- (24) Talking Machine Review March 1912; Obituary Brighton Gazette. The files of the New York Times about January-September 1904 are informative on this period of Gouraud's life.
- (25) Talking Machine Review March 1912.
- (26) Hillandale News No 44.
- (27) Letter Charles Cox to George Frow 16 September 1973; obituary The Times 10 February 1912.
- (28) Shoreham and Southwick District Gazette 25 August and 1 September 1900; Brighton

Gazette 21 February and 24 February 1912;
Talking Machine Review March 1912.

This paper could not have been written without the wholehearted assistance of many people particularly

C Batt, ALA, Brighton Area Library, East Sussex
Charles S Cox: Friend of the Pioneers
K A Doughty, FLA, Librarian, London Borough of Southwark

George L Frow, President, City of London
Phonograph & Gramophone Society
J E G Hurren, Editor, Brighton & Hove Gazette
B P Maxwell, The Open University, BBC
A O Meakin, FLA, Chief Librarian, London Borough of Croydon
D Welch, FLA, Chief Librarian, South Eastern Education and Library Board, Northern Ireland.

That assistance is gladly acknowledged – errors of interpretation of material which they provided are the author's sole responsibility.

ANDY'S SNIPPETS

HISTORIC RECORDS ASSOCIATION FORMED.

An association called the Modern Historic Records Association, has recently been formed in America. One of its chief departments will be a collection of phonograph records, upon which the dialects, speeches, and voices of famous people will be preserved. The association will erect a large central museum in Washington, where the discs and other articles of interest will be stored.

COLUMBIA "BABY REGENT" PLACED ON SALE.

The "Baby Regent," a new model of the Columbia Grafonola, has been placed on sale over here at a much earlier date than was expected. When closed the new model presents the appearance of a beautiful square table of a modified Louis XVI design. All the mechanism is enclosed within a drawer, which closes in the ordinary way and may be pulled out when the instrument is in use. There is, of course, no horn, the sound being carried to the opening in the front of the table by a concealed device which presents to the sight of the auditor only a series of three oval openings, covered, when desired, by folding panel doors. The price of the new model is \$100 (£21).

U.S.A. — Reported in the U.K. in December 1911.

Recorded Vocal Art Society

President VIVIAN LIFF

The Recorded Vocal Art Society was formed in 1953 to encourage the enjoyment of Opera and Song

*Bloomsbury Institute
Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church
Shaftesbury Avenue*

Junction New Oxford Street - Almost opposite Oasis Swimming Pool
Nearest Tube - Tottenham Court Road or Holborn

PROGRAMME 1977

5 Jan	† ARTISTS WORTH REMEMBERING	IVOR NEWTON
19 Jan	† ANNA POLLAK REMINISCES	ANNA POLLAK
2 Feb	NOT ONLY ANGELS SING	Charles Ginn
16 Feb	REISSUE OF 'WE FOLLOWED OUR STARS'	Ida Cook
2 Mar	THE ENGLISH SINGERS	Michael Scott
16 Mar	LATEST RELEASES FROM THE H.M.V. TREASURY SERIES	Bryan Crimp
30 Mar	THE ALSO SANGS, Some neglected singers particularly tenors	Alan Bilgora
13 April	SOME GERMAN SINGERS FOR A CHANGE	Donald Priddon
27 April	RECENT RUBINI REISSUES	Vivian Liff
11 May	(1) A.G.M. (2) OPERATIC REMINISCENCES	Aldo Delicata
25 May	SOME CHOICE RECORDS	Joe Jacobs
29 June	VERISMO SCHOOL OF OPERA	John Freestone
21 Sept	CENTENARY SURVEY FROM TIN-FOIL TO QUADRAPHONY	Gordon Bromly
5 Oct	SUNG FROM THE HEART	Joan Webb
19 Oct	ENGLISH SONG	Peter Jones
2 Nov	PIRATE TREASURE	George Stuart
16 Nov	AN INEXHAUSTIBLE CORNUCOPIA	Bernard Garth
30 Nov	VERDI - MY FAVOURITE COMPOSER	Edward Bridgewater
14 Dec	SEVEN DECADES OF GREAT SINGING	Larry Lustig

† Visitors 50p at these programmes

All meetings begin at 7 p.m. and normally close at 9.15 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP: £1.50 payable to the Hon. Treasurer at the meetings.

ATTENDANCE FEE per meeting: MEMBERS 5p VISITORS 25p

Hon. Secretary—Peter Orr

Hon. Joint Secretary—Mrs. D. Bromly, 33 The Crescent,
West Wickham, Kent BR4 0HB 01-777 2428

SEYMOUR AND SYKES – SYKES AND SEYMOUR

by Frank Andrews

Mr. Henry Seymour has recently had much coverage in the Hillandale News. He was, at the time of the founding of our Society, the President of the North London Phonograph and Gramophone Society, from which many of our first members were drawn. I have been told that Mr. Seymour was also a member of our Society, but I have no confirmation of this. He is known to have been a visitor on occasions. Mr. Adrian Sykes was our first Honorary President.

Both Seymour and Sykes were inventors, and were obviously well known to each other, and to phonograph and gramophone enthusiasts in Britain who read the trade and public periodicals devoted to the recorded sound business.

In 1911, before our Society was formed, or the North London for that matter, Sykes and Seymour had been crossing swords over the merits of the disc versus the cylinder. The controversy was remarked upon by Linzey A. Willcox, a prolific letter writer to the periodicals, and published in the June 1911 edition of "The Talking Machine News". I partially quote from his letter,

"I do not wish to split hairs with Mr. Sykes, but he appears to think that nobody ought to have an opinion but himself. Mr. Seymour has no right whatever, (according to Mr. Sykes), to express his opinion. However I am going to express mine.

"Mr. Sykes says he is going to compare the finest (in his opinion) record in the disc form with the Edison cylinder, and he mentions the Gramophone (H.M.V.) record.

"I am sure everybody does not think this the best disc. I don't for one. I prefer the Clarion Ebonoid and Pathé

to any discs on the market, and, as far as the needle discs are concerned, give me the Edison Bell Velvet Face. (These last were those which bore red and gold labels - F.A.).

"Mr. Seymour gives his most valuable opinion and Mr. Sykes promptly sits on him. I really think Mr. Sykes might tone down his attacks a little more. The fierce way he sets about people does not make for pleasant reading.

"I (in my humble opinion) quite agree with Mr. Seymour that the adoption of the cylinder track on the disc has led to a decided improvement in tone. That is Mr. Seymour's opinion and it is also mine. That the matter is controversial is Mr. Sykes' opinion.

"Mr. Sykes does not like anyone to say that the disc is better than the cylinder.

"I do not wish Mr. Sykes to lose sight of the fact that I am still a cylinder enthusiast, but if a man tells me he prefers a disc to a cylinder, I don't jump down his throat and tell him he has no business to express an opinion.

"Mr. Sykes suggests that all disc machine owners should also purchase a phonograph. I wonder if he has a disc machine? If not, he should get one. One suggestion is quite as good as the other. What say disc enthusiasts?"

Yours truly, Linzey A Willcox.

Mr. Sykes founded the North London Society in December, after the foregoing letter was written. Mr. Seymour became Honorary President and Mr. Adrian Sykes, B.Sc., the Honorary Secretary. The question is, had these two gentlemen buried the hatchet, or was the disc versus cylinder issue between them the root cause of the secession of members in 1919 to

form the City of London Phonograph Society or the London Edison Society, as it was first styled?

Mr. Seymour had been active in the phonograph world since 1900 and was the founder of the Microphonograph Company, which made and sold his inventions and improvements for the phonograph. He later turned to the gramophone for his business activities.

Mr. Sykes was an inventor who had a number of his inventions accepted by the Admiralty during the Great War. He was also responsible for one of the early types of microphone employed by the British Broadcasting Company in the early days of radio broadcasting. This while he was Hon. President of our Society.

Mr. Adrian Sykes, B.Sc., Honorary President of our Society, was, as I have already remarked, an inventor and, from being a staunch Edisonite, later turned to the Gramophone world. Here is an account of his association with the disc business.

It concerns his connection with "Gramophone Records, Limited", a company whose name is probably unknown to most members. There were two companies styled with this name, the first was incorporated on the 14th of January 1928 with a nominal capital of £100 divided into 2,000 shares of 1s. each. There were only two subscribers, viz., A.E. Lodenmark, Chairman, and Chas. Stanley Temple, Secretary. The registered office was at 9 & 10 Pancras Lane, Queen Street, E.C. The object of the company was to deal in phonograph and gramophone records, — "Gramophone Records" was underlined! Before two months had passed the company decided to wind up, voluntarily. On the 9th of March 1928 the Liquidator consented to the registration of a new company to be called "Gramophone Records, Limited". The first company was finally wound up on July 26th, when all its books were destroyed. I believe it not to have carried on any business.

The second company was founded with a nominal capital of £850,000 divided into

400,000 shares of 10s. each and 13 million deferred shares of 1s. each. It received its Certificate of Incorporation on 17th March, 1928, its registered office being at 110, Cannon Street, E.C.4. Chas. Stanley Temple was also Company Secretary to the new company. The first subscribers to this company, six clerks and one cashier, stated on the Memorandum, dated 9th March, that no Directors had been appointed by them and no one had consented to act as Directors.

Seven Directors were named on the 22nd of March who were Guy Burney, formerly known as Isadore Bernard Birnbaum, founder and managing director of the Sterling Telephone & Electric Co. Ltd.; Douglas B. W. Markham, joint managing director of The Scottish Finance Co. Ltd.; Lt. Col. Adrian Simpson, late deputy managing director of Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Co. Ltd.; Frederick S. Hooker, the Chairman, who was also chairman of The Rubber and Industrial Trust, Ltd.; Zambrene Limited, and Tarfroid Limited; Thomas William Smith, a director of Associated Newspapers, Ltd. from 1907 to 1921, which included The Daily Mail, The Evening News, The Weekly Despatch, etc. and also a director of Weldon's Limited, from 1922 to 1927; Stephen B. Skevington, a director of Perrier Limited; and Robert H. Wheeler, who was a chairman of one company and a director in two others.

The appointed Technical Advisor of the company was our Honorary President, Adrian F. Sykes, B.Sc., and the Director of Music was Lieut. Col. J. Mackenzie Rogan, C.V.O., Mus. Doc., Hon.R.A.M., etc., late Senior Director of Music of His Majesty's Brigade of Guards.

This Company had been formed to acquire the sole licence for (a) Electrical Recording of Sounds on Discs in Great Britain under the Royal Letters Patent covering the invention of Mr. Adrian F. Sykes, B.Sc., A.M.I.E.E. and, in addition, certain applications which were pending for Letters Patent covering improvements by Mr. Sykes on his inventions. The

royalty to be paid to Mr. Sykes under this license was 1/8th of a penny per disc made and sold, subject to a minimum royalty in the first year of £5,000, and thereafter of £7,500 per annum. (b) To make electrical apparatus for reproduction from records through amplifiers and loud-speakers, under the said patents, at a royalty to be agreed between Adrian F. Sykes and the Company.

The records, to be made under the patents referred to, were designed to play twice as long, size for size, as any standard record then on the market.

The production and sale of these long-running records was to be a special feature of the Company. With this Company's new system of recording it was forecast that the musical listener could look forward to hearing the whole of symphony movements without breaks and cuts.

Investors in the Company were informed that well-known Dance Bands were available to record exclusively, the new type of recording was claimed to be especially valuable for Dance Music.

Gramophone Records Ltd. claimed that, not being burdened with old stocks of master records, it would be able to produce both "standard" and "long running" types by the most up-to-date electrical methods, and also to produce smaller records, with as much playing time as standard records, making them eminently suitable for the portable gramophone trade.

Mr. Adrian F. Sykes, whose license had been acquired by the Company, was to give the Company the benefit of his advice and assistance. The Admiralty, during the war of 1914-1918, had acquired the rights of the Sykes-Morris Directional Hydrophones for use in submarine detection. He was the inventor of the Sykes-Marconi Microphone, which had been supplied to all British Broadcasting Stations under the Sole License granted by him to the Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Co. Ltd. The license granted to Gramophone Records, Limited

covered the same patents, inter alia, as those covered in the license to the Marconi company.

The basic patent was No. 160223, granted in 1919, the year our Society was formed. By 1928, twenty other patents were in Adrian F. Sykes' name with another eight pending. He had four patents granted in the U.S.A. with another three pending. Since 1923, Mr. Sykes had received many thousands of pounds in royalties under the licence granted to the Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Co. Ltd.

The services of Mr. Herbert Godfrey, the well-known conductor, had also been secured by Gramophone Records, Limited and Mr. Percival J. Packman was designated Chief of Recording.

Arrangements had been made for the actual records to be manufactured at Messrs. Ebonestos Insulators, Ltd.'s factory in London. All that the new Company needed to spend money on was a Showroom, a Warehouse, Recording Studios and a Research Department. Arrangements had already been made with Ebonestos Insulators, Limited for the pressing of 200,000 discs per month.

Pending the acquisition of a recording studio, recording was to be undertaken by the plant already in use by our Honorary President.

Initially, there was no intention of manufacturing machines but it was envisaged that radio-gramophones would later be provided under Sykes' patents, to be manufactured by a subsidiary firm. All such development work was to be carried out by the Research Department of the Company.

10,000,000 records per annum were expected to be sold, realising a profit of £125,000 for the first year's trading.

Mr. Henry Seymour, then Technical Advisor to "The Sound Wave", reported that he found the estimated output of manufacture, sales and profit to be in order and gave it as his opinion that the long-playing record would place the Company in advantageous position in relation to all other disc record companies. His report was dated 19th March, 1928.

By a contract dated March 20th our former Honorary President was granted 280,000 fully paid up deferred shares in the Company for his license, the contract being between him and the Industrial Debenture Company Ltd. and the Rubber & Industrial Trust, Ltd.

A contract of the same date was entered into between Mr. P. J. Packman, the recording expert, and the Company, by which Mr. Packman received 20,000 fully paid up deferred shares in the Company.

Through an intermediary, Bertram Austin Chapman, an agreed contract was entered into, also on the 20th March 1928, between Ebonestos Insulators, Limited and the Company for the manufacture and pressing of the discs.

All legal requirements of the new Company having been met, it received its certificate enabling it to start business on the 22nd of March, 1928.

By the 26th of June 1928, Mr. Adrian F. Sykes had been elected to the Board of Directors of "Gramophone Records, Limited".

Mr. Sykes' letters patent numbers were as follows:—

1919 — 160223.

1921 — 186658 190759 190840 194424

1923 — 210956 220420 222413 222924
227391 227162

1924 — 236313 243395

1925 — 256280 256558 253159 252228
258137 263502

1928 — 272622.

Patents applied for:—

1927 — 18071 28923 29378 14363

31489 18577 3779 4526

1928 — 3139.

On Monday July 16th, at 12 noon, at The Cannon Street Hotel, London, E.C.2, the Chairman of the Company, Mr. F. Stacey Hooker, called the Statutory Meeting of Gramophone Records Limited to order. The Secretary then read the notice convening the meeting and a report from the auditors. The Chairman then addressed the shareholders and the first part of his speech was to tell his hearers how the

company's financial affairs had been conducted to date, which he was required to do in compliance with the Companies Act. The second part of his speech was an accounting of what the company had been about on the industrial side and was as follows:—

"As you are aware, we came into existence on March 28, 1928, and the programme in our prospectus mentioned, amongst other things, a temporary studio which my colleague, Mr. A. F. Sykes, had erected at his private house, with the object of making the first records. Mr. Sykes, I should like to say, was requested by me, prior to the incorporation of the Company, to produce a record which would bear out the statements which it was proposed to insert in the prospectus. I stipulated that I would not take the chair of the Company until Mr. Sykes had produced a record which was able to play at least twice as long as any record on the market, and this is the actual record which Mr. Sykes produced prior to the incorporation of the company. (The Chairman then exhibited the record).

"It is a twelve inch disc, and you will notice the playing part is only partly covered over the surface of the disc, and it is possible to record another 20 per cent upon it. This is the actual record, and it plays over eight minutes. (Hear, hear). I think, therefore, I am safe in claiming that we have a twelve inch record that plays in excess of other electrically cut records by four minutes. I was then satisfied that Mr. Sykes could, by means of his process and electrical recording apparatus, produce a record to carry out all we claimed. (Hear, hear).

"Mr. Sykes soon discovered that he was working at a disadvantage at his studio in his private house. The Directors thereupon decided and Mr. Sykes agreed, that any serious work on an extensive scale could not be successfully accomplished in this way. The next thing was to find a studio which would deal with the conditions set up by Mr. Sykes.

"In the first place, the making of records is a very fine, highly specialised art; they have to

be made under very exacting conditions. One of the necessities is a room to accommodate, say, the massed bands of the Guards, and for this purpose a larger room than this, in which we are holding our meeting, is required. Such accommodation had to be easy of access to the West End of London for the convenience of artists, but the most important feature was that the studio had to be in a situation free from electrical disturbances such as underground railways, electric tramways, and motors and dynamos in the immediate vicinity. Another condition was that we should be in a position that would put us outside the possibility of annoying our neighbours.

"Each one of your Directors and our staff made repeated enquiries for suitable premises and eventually, through the instrumentality of Mr. Packman, our recorder, we were successful in finding what we needed at 84a High Road, Kilburn, N.W.6. We purchased the freehold property at that address. We took possession on May 21st last. Previously it had been used as a Dance Hall, and attached to it is a private house and a number of auxiliary buildings. It is ideal for our purpose.

"We made arrangements for our colleague, Mr. Guy Burney, to take in hand the work of equipping the studio. This was a matter of urgency, as we could not produce our records until a studio had been equipped. That task has been completed and the studio is now ready.

"Already we have been recording on a number of occasions and, during the last few weeks, we have produced our first satisfactory commercial records. (Hear, hear). I have brought with me a sample of one of our productions, this is a ten-inch record, and on this record there are four numbers, that is to say, four songs. I believe I am right in claiming that there is no ten-inch record on the market of this size with four songs, the duration of the record is about five and a half minutes on each side. The standard cut of records now on the market, I think, Mr.

Sykes would describe as eighty threads to the inch. I do not know quite what that means, but I gather that for every given one inch on a record there are eighty revolutions. Am I right, Mr. Sykes?"

Mr. Sykes: "That is so."

The Chairman: "We have cut two hundred and twenty threads to the inch, so that the ratio is two hundred and twenty to eighty. (Hear, hear).

"On our commercial record the cut is nearer one hundred and fifty to the inch. I think the number of threads to the inch will be governed largely by the kind of music we are recording.

"I should like to say we have secured the best possible staff there could be for making records. (Hear, hear). Our principal members have been taken from the leading people in the industry.

"First of all we have our technical director, Mr. Sykes, whose name is very well known, then, as an assistant to Mr. Sykes, we have Mr. Geoffrey Wheeler, who puts into the business a great deal of hard work.

"On the record side we have Mr. Percival Packman, who has been in the industry something like thirty years.

"On the musical side we have another well-known figure in the gramophone world, Lt.-Col. Mackenzie-Rogan, who, for so long, was connected with the bands of His Majesty's Brigade of Guards. He is assisted by Mr. Herbert Godfrey, who is also very well-known in the musical world.

"On our sales side we have Mr. B. A. Chapman as our Sales Manager. So you will understand, from what I have said, that we are equipped with a first-class staff and studio.

"The next point is the question of artists. We were told at the inception of this Company that all the leading artists were booked. I may say that the only leading artists that it is impossible to book are those that are dead. (Laughter). We shall have no difficulty in getting all the artists we require from the top

of the tree, in the way of classical performers, down to jazz and material of that character. We also have at our disposal a large number of first-class bands.

"We have retained the services of well-known conductors such as Sir Edward German, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, and Mr. Herman Finck. I think you will agree with me that these names are household words in the musical world.

"With regard to the production side, we have a battery of automatic presses at our sole disposal, so that the question of turning out the records will present no difficulty.

"You will probably ask when are we going to have our records on the market? In the first place, it would be rather foolish for us to market, say, thirty records, as that number would not be a large enough range for a musical dealer to carry; it will be the policy of the Board to collect a good library of records, and secure a demand for them by an intensive advertising programme.

"We have been approached for our agency in many parts of the world, and the dealers are clamouring to know when we are going to give them supplies. It is possible that we shall specialise in a six-inch record, to play the same length as a 10-inch disc. The advantage, of course, is obvious. If you have a small record, which will give the same result as a large one, it is an advantage to those who possess a portable gramophone.

"With regard to our working capital, we have resources which will approximate £175,000. Out of that we have chiefly to provide for a stock of records, and book debts which we shall have outstanding from our dealers, and, of course, there is the cost of advertising, plus expenses at our studio. We have at our command a sum abundantly sufficient for all our needs. This will enable us to do the large turnover which we have every reason to expect.

"We have a series of some twenty-eight patents, all of which I think Mr. Sykes responsible for. These patents are of considerable

value, and place us in a completely independent position.

"We have made arrangements of a provisional character in Australia for the working of our patents. Negotiations were opened up over here with a gentleman over here from Australia a few weeks ago. This gentleman is a member of a gramophone manufacturing company in Australia. His company possesses a factory in Sydney, and has some fourteen distributing depots throughout the Commonwealth.

"We made an arrangement with him, subject to the sanction of his directors in Sydney. A cable came back to say that they agreed the particulars, which he had sent out, and asked him to take home a complete draft agreement for ratification. The arrangement provides for us to join hands with our friends who, I may say, are in a very strong financial position. A small company will be formed with a capital of £30,000. That company will simply manufacture records and, through the present organisation, will distribute throughout the Commonwealth. Of this £30,000, our Australian friends will provide £15,000 in cash, and our company £7,000, and we are given, as consideration for the use of our patents, shares to the value of £8,000. We shall be paid a royalty on every record manufactured. I cannot tell you what that royalty is..... suffice it to say that it is a satisfactory royalty. We have been approached from a number of other countries and preliminary correspondence has taken place. I have no doubt, therefore, when we meet again after the termination of our first year we shall be able to announce that further arrangements have been made. (Hear, hear).

"Since the issue of our prospectus some dozen other companies have been formed to manufacture gramophone records. That, of course, means a certain amount of competition for all of us, but the product of this particular Company is outstanding, though it is felt that whilst all these newcomers must take some business which we should otherwise obtain, yet

there is plenty of room for us as we have specialised in a record which is out of the ordinary class, and, owing to its epoch-making nature, we feel that there is ample room for us in the industry. (Applause).

"It frequently happens that an industry becomes over-crowded and, as a consequence, amalgamations take place. Probably that will eventuate in the gramophone industry. With this end in view, we have been approached by three or four friendly competitors asking to join hands. In fact, we are in close negotiations with one particular firm that has an old-established business dating back, I think, twenty years. This firm produces gramophones and they have a large library of records. I can not say at this stage if the fusion will eventuate, but as there have been rumours abroad, I felt it was only right to mention that negotiations are taking place, and it may be that there will be a fusion between this company and the other, including probably a working arrangement with a third company. There have also been suggestions thrown out by other companies, but so far no negotiations have taken place other than what I have referred to.

"We shall not conclude any merger with other interests without first of all applying to the shareholders and placing the facts before them so that they will have an opportunity of expressing their views as to whether we should proceed or otherwise. (Hear, hear).

"We should not put forward any scheme unless we felt it was in the interest of Gramophone Records Limited." (Applause).

The chairman then proceeded to explain the fluctuations in the market price of shares in view of the company's being at a discount. He then returned to the topic of their records.

"It is our intention to send shareholders, probably monthly, a list of the various records as we produce them from time to time, so that shareholders can go to their local dealers and purchase. If shareholders would like to have a record from the first production we shall be

pleased to send them one. We can only send out one, and shall ask them to pay the retail price. If we made a practice of selling shareholders records we should be treading on the dealers' toes. The dealer makes his profit out of the sale, and it is unfair to take away his living."

.....
 "We extend an invitation to any of you in the room to come to our studio this morning. There is a bus and private cars ready at the door of the hotel, and, if you can spare the time, you will be there in about 15 minutes. You will be able to see what we have done, and it will give you an opportunity of hearing our records played. (Hear, hear).

"We are proud of what we have done, and we are anxious for you to see."

The Chairman then said that concluded his statement and asked if there were any questions. There were none and, after some applause, he asked Mr. Henry Seymour to say a few words about the Company's studio.

"Mr. Seymour is a veteran in our art, and has spent his life in the gramophone industry. I might say that he is not a shareholder, but in our prospectus he made a report on the record. He has been to our studio and will tell you its merits or otherwise. Would you care to say a few words, Mr. Seymour?"

Mr. Henry Seymour: "I speak, sir, with some misgivings at a meeting like this, but I must say that I am very happy in being able to endorse all the remarks which have been made by Mr. Hooker as to the value of the studio this company possesses. In my opinion, having an experience of some 28 years on the technical side, first on the phonograph and then on the gramophone, I can say with certainty that you have one of the finest studios it is possible to get. You might, of course, have had a more elaborate studio, such as that in which the "His Master's Voice" record is produced, but you have a studio that could not be more efficient than at High Road, Kilburn. I visited this studio last week. I then saw your processes, and also

the equipment. They are both equally satisfactory. One or two little minor details may require adjustment, but that will come with a little more experience.I am myself very interested in this company, and I have no doubt that you possess something which is equal to the best. You must have a silent surface, and as that is so, you will be able to hold your own with the best.

"Although we are a new company, we start with all the combined experience of the past. You produce a record which plays twice as long as any other record and that, in itself, should insure the success of this company. I found the staff you have working for you a very practical body of men. Mr. Sykes; in him you have a man who stands second to none in the electrical record-producing business. He invented the hydrophone for the Government. Out of that came the broadcasting microphone which Mr. Sykes developed, and inasmuch as records have such an enormous boom, through the introduction of the electric method of recording, he now comes into it with a competence which is equal to any; I went through the recording room, and I know that Mr. Sykes is master of his job.

"With regard to Mr. Packman, he will find him a very useful ally. He has had 30 years' experience in the making of records. I think it was 25 years ago when I was in the record business with Mr. Packman. That was in the early days. With regard to Mr. Sykes, I think I have known him for about 20 years.

"Should you go down to the studio, I am sure you will be pleased at the progress which has been made. I have heard it mentioned that your shares have gone down because of the delay there has been in producing the goods; ladies and gentlemen, there has been no delay.

"The record that you produce will be of an ideal standard, and in saying that, it is not a pious hope, but I am stating facts. I am perfectly certain that you have a record which is

as good as any record there is, and if you go down to the studio today you will hear something that will make you glad that you purchased shares in your company. You will hear not only fine reproduction, but one with the added advantage of lasting twice as long as any other record."

A Shareholder: "Is there sufficient control over the manufacture to insure that our records will be quite equal to the "His Master's Voice"?"

Chairman: "Undoubtedly. Are there any other questions?"

The Shareholder: "Where is your manufacturing done?"

Chairman: "In the prospectus we stated that a contract had been entered into with the Ebonestos Manufacturing Company, Ltd."

The Shareholder: "Would you mind saying how many records they can produce today?"

Chairman: "They can produce as many as we require, and there will be additional plant if it is necessary to put it down."

The Shareholder: "If you do put down the additional plant, will you have it running for the autumn campaign to enable you to produce this 200,000?"

Chairman: "Yes."

The meeting was then brought to a close, an air of confidence in the company's prospects having been generated and maintained. But what of the artistes whom Gramophone Records Limited were contracting to make recordings? I have been fortunate enough to discover some details of some of the contracts and these were, in date order:—

4th June 1928. For twelve months, the Hotel Cecil Band, twelve sessions at £50 per session.

5th June 1928. For twelve months, the Band of H.M. Royal Horse Guards, (The Blues), at 12 guineas per session for six sessions, plus "Band Rates" for the musicians.

11th June 1928. For ten months, Edward German, conductor/composer, ten sessions at 30 guineas each.

- 11th June 1928. For three months, Sir Alexander McKenzie, conductor/composer; three sessions at 25 gns per session.
- 14th June 1928. Thorpe Bates, baritone; for twelve months, twenty items at £10 each.
- 14th June 1928. Frank Titterton, tenor; for twelve months, twenty items at 14 gns. per item.
- 18th June 1928. The Kneller Hall Band, two sessions at 12 gns. per session, plus, "Band Rates" for musicians.
- 21st June 1928. Ernest Hastings, entertainer; an option of £50 for one double sided disc or six discs at £40 each.
- 22nd June 1928. Enid Cruikshank, ?; for twelve months, twelve items at £26-5s. for each two items.
- 4th July 1928. The Selma Four; for twelve months, six sessions at £26-5s. per session.
- 5th July 1928. Arthur Fear, bass; for twelve months, sixteen items at £12 per item.
- 18th July 1928. The Ernest Leggett Band; twelve months, twenty-four items at 15 gns. per item.
- 20th July 1928. May Risby, ?; for twelve months, twenty items at 10 gns. each item.
- 1st Aug. 1928. T. C. Sterndale-Bennett, composer/singer; for twelve months, ten items at 10 gns. each.
- 18th Aug. 1928. Harry Brindle, bass; for twelve months, twenty-four items at 4 gns. each with a minimum of £200 for the first year's recording.
- 18th Aug. 1928. Archibald Winter, ?; for twelve months, twenty-four items at 5 gns. each with a minimum of £200 for the first year's recording.
- 3rd Sept. 1928. Ethel Bartlett & Rae Robertson, piano duettists; for twelve months, six sessions at £31-10s. for four sides.
- 12th Sept. 1928. Herman Finck, conductor/ composer; for six months, three sessions at 15 gns. per session.
- 18th Sept. 1928. Robert Carr, baritone; for

twelve months, twenty-four items at 5 gns. each.

20th Sept. 1928. Harry Dearth, bass; twenty items at £15 per item.

The accompanist contracted was Clara Asher-Lucas, for six months, at 3 gns. per session.

Has anyone ever seen or heard of any disc records made by Gramophone Records Ltd.? Were any ever put on general sale? what happened to the contract for 200,000 discs to be pressed per month?

The Chairman had referred to negotiations, already in hand, for fusion with another company of twenty or so years standing, which was already dealing in gramophones and had its own library of record masters. The company he was referring to had been the privately owned limited company of the American, William Sternberg, (who lived in the Cricklewood, London, N.W. district), which was "The British Homophone Company, Ltd.", but since Gramophone Records Limited had been incorporated for the second time, but before the Statutory Meeting of July 16th, 1928, "The British Homophone Company, Ltd." had been re-formed as a public joint-stock company, Mr. William D. Sternberg becoming one of the five directors on the board. The offices of the British Homophone Co., Ltd. were at 19, City Road, London, E.C. at this time.

On the 12th of October, 1928, an agreement was signed between The British Homophone Co. Ltd. and Gramophone Records Limited, whereby all the assets of the latter were sold to the former. The price of the acquisition was £224,000.

On the 23rd of November 1928, the resolution to voluntarily wind up Gramophone Records Limited made on the 8th previous, was confirmed. The cost of the liquidation was borne by the British Homophone Co., Ltd. but there was a delay in the final winding up caused by (1) the preparation of a correct list of contributaries, (2) the collection of "calls", due by members, (3) legal actions against Gramophone Records Limited brought by contractors,

advertising agents, artistes, employers and Mr. Sykes, the inventor of the Long playing record.

The whole costs of these actions were borne by The British Homophone Co. Ltd. which then owned the company being sued, so that the Liquidator of Gramophone Records, Ltd. was in fact acting as Homophone's agent!

The creditors of the company were paid in full. Mr. Sykes received a royalty of £4,000 with the final winding up meeting on December 30th, 1931.

But that is not quite the end of the story. In November 1928, The British Homophone Co. Ltd. had confirmed some old contracts with former Gramophone Records Ltd. people. Lt.-Col. McKenzie-Rogan had been contracted as Director of Music for two years, as from the 1st of May, 1928, at a salary of £700 per year.

B. Austin Chapman, Sales Manager of the Long Running Record Department, had a contract for one year, from the 21st of May, 1928, at £750 per year, plus 1% of part of the profits.

Percy J. Packman, Recorder, had a five year contract from the 17th of March, 1928, at £1,000 per year.

Herbert Godfrey, Conductor, had a contract for one year as Assistant Technical Musical Advisor and Assistant Director of Music at £500 per year, from 1st of June, 1928.

Henry Seymour, Expert Advisor, contracted for three years from 1st of June, 1928, at £250 per year, plus 5s. per hour in excess of 12 hours per week.

The above contract explains why Seymour spoke of "our company" when he addressed the shareholders at the Statutory Meeting.

Geoffrey Wheeler, Assistant Technical Advisor, contracted for one year from April 1st, 1928, at £500 per year.

The contracts with the artists were sealed between both companies.

On June 13th, 1931, a three day hearing was heard by Mr. Justice McCardie, in the King's Bench Division, in an action brought by

The British Homophone Co. Ltd. and Gramophone Records Limited (in voluntary liquidation) and merged with the former company, for recession of their agreement to pay our Hon. President, Mr. Adrian Francis Sykes, of Arundel House, New Barnet, £5,000 in respect of his invention of the longplaying record and the use of other patents; and for the repayment of £5,000 already paid to him.

On his side, Mr. Sykes was counter-claiming for the £7,500 due to him, under his contract with Gramophone Records Limited in March 1928, as royalties payable under the licence he had granted them.

British Homophone claimed that the eight minutes-a-side record, in their hands, had never been a commercial achievement. Mr. Sykes had been a Director of British Homophone Co. Ltd. since January 1930.

Sir Boyd Merriman, K.C., on behalf of the plaintiffs, explained that the hope of Gramophone Records Limited had been that the lateral, or Berliner cut of disc records then in common use, would have been supplanted by the "hill-and-dale" or phono-cut which Mr. Sykes' patents employed, and which used 200 threads to the inch in place of the 90 per inch on other records. The parties had fallen out, as it had not been possible to make the records on a commercial scale. There had been expectations of sales exceeding 10,000,000 in the first year of trading. The plaintiffs were carrying on business in other records.

Ex-chairman of the British Homophone Co. Ltd. Mr. George Ralph Hall Caine, gave evidence, stating that the patents had been assigned to the Homophone Company after it had become a public company. He had heard examples of Mr. Sykes's vertical cut long-playing records, and had understood that Mr. Sykes would be able to make his process commercially advantageous. Witness said he thought they were a most valuable asset for his company.

Mr. Justice McCardie expressed the wish to

to hear the records and advised, that as the dispute was chiefly over the royalties, the parties should settle the matter between themselves. Although records and machines were produced in court, they were not played.

Sir Boyd Merriman, by the side of a horned gramophone, announced that by having come to a settlement, the Court had lost the chance of hearing a recitative on a gramophone record which they had intended to play.

Mr. Justice McCardie: "I shall be very sorry to miss it."

Sir Boyd Merriman said that both plaintiffs withdrew any imputation of fraud against Mr. Sykes and a substantial sum was to be paid him in full settlement. They were also cancelling the licence, and the assignment from one company to the other, and they were not going to dispute the royalty or validity of Mr. Sykes's 28 patents.

Mr. LeQuesne, K.C., for Mr. Sykes, explained that the patents were of very great value and represented lengthy research with very important possibilities and that some of the inventions included in the licence which had been issued had already been bought by one of the largest talking machine businesses in America.

Both sides bore their own costs. Mr. Sykes resigned from the Board of Directors of the British Homophone Co. Ltd. in August, 1931, one month before our Society had its last pre-war reported meeting, when the Parlophone Co. Ltd. presented a programme, and it was announced that the Society was turning to the disc side of the talking machine world, phonographs and cylinder records having been out of manufacture for two years or so.

Incidentally, one of the demonstration discs of Gramophone Records Limited had Frank Titterton singing four different songs.



Picture
supplied by
DON WATSON

CARUSO — A LEGENDARY PERFORMER

Recently issued in the United States is the very first L.P. of historic vocal interest to be processed by computer to bring out the hitherto hidden natural sound of old acoustic recordings eliminating the recording horn resonant and reverberant character acquired by such original recording systems. Quite rightly the very first artist to be given this new computer treatment is Enrico Caruso, the foundation figure of the great golden age of acoustic recordings and perhaps the greatest figure responsible for making the event of sound recordings to be acceptable to a critical public.

The L.P. with title as the above heading is on R.C.A. Victor CRM1-1749. There are sixteen selections made between the years 1906 - 1920 and it says much for the daring of the new process that most recording dates chosen are of the years 1906 to 1911, with just two 1920 examples.

With the L.P. comes a large booklet devoting one page to details of the new computer process as explained by the inventor, other pages are devoted in script and illustration to the life and death of Caruso written by Francis Robinson, assistant manager of the Metropolitan Opera and author of the out of print book "Caruso: His Life in Pictures".

Mr Robinson provides from his collection the rare and wonderful content of illustration the booklet with the L.P. gives.

I, a non collector of operatic or classical works, have always made one exception in the collection of Enrico Caruso and over the years have acquired two complete sets of all his recordings placed onto L.P. ('Murray Hill' and 'Olympus' labels) and also have several 78's of this great artist, and so using no other yardstick of judgement other than a receptive ear for old recordings of a favourite artist I can say that to my mind this new creation of technology as placed before the public is very good indeed.

An advertizing sticker placed onto the L.P.

sleeve besides indicating it to be the first release in the revolutionary new Stockham/Soundstream computer process calls it 'Truly sensational reproduction'.

Elsewhere on the sleeve is the following comment:

All of the arias in this album have been restored by a newly developed method. The complexity and precision of this method require the use of computer processing.

Surface scratch is not the most important problem with old records of archive quality. Instead, it is the resonant and reverberant character given to the voice and musical instruments by the primitive recording horns used to focus the sound onto the original wax discs. This effect produces a sound you would achieve by talking while cupping your hands in front of your mouth (try it). Loud bursts of sounds also occur when certain tones are played or sung. The computer processing removes these effects. The resulting sound retains some of the original flavor, but the clarity of expression, the texture of the voice, the artistic interest and the impact of the accompaniment are dramatically changed.

— Thomas G. Stockham, Jr.

For myself, I always play acoustic recordings on a wide ranging frequency controlled amplifier (J.V.C. VN-700) and would not dream of playing my acoustic collection otherwise. The results being very good indeed and within the reach of many collecting addicts with the means to buy such frequency controlled amplifiers via their hi-fi dealer.

Those who choose not to go to the expense of such new equipment can be even more grateful for R.C.A. Victor and the Stockham/Soundstream system for providing this ready to play 'platter' of good sound from a bygone age and is in itself a great tribute to the invention of recorded sound.

Les Kaye

HISTORIC L.P. REISSUES

Readers will be pleased to know that the long deleted and rare L.P. issued by the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation in 1961 called "The Sound of Fame" has just been reissued, with their permission by 'MARK 56' records of P.O. Box 1, Anaheim, California, U.S.A., issue number 723.

Now retitled "The First Recorded Sounds", it is in a nice new package with a front cover of ornate design with a large photo of Edison himself.

The back of the record sleeve is the same layout as the original Edison Foundation issue and gives details of the artists therein, among the selection being Sir Arthur Sullivan, Lucrezia Bori, Rachmaninoff, Sophie Tucker, Emmy Destinn, Collins & Harlan, etc. etc., all of course taken from Edison cylinders and discs.

Also recently issued on American Columbia L.P. Y33793 in their Odyssey series is Claudia Muzio Vol. 2, this is Edison Diamond disc recordings she made in 1920-21.

The disc is a sequel to a previous one containing earlier Diamond Disc issues (L.P. Number Y32676).

Les Kaye

CORRESPONDENCE

Chislehurst Kent.

Dear Mr. Brott,

I believe the Society wants to know of any local celebrations of the centenary of the phonograph, to mention in the "Hill and Dale News".

Therefore here is a minor contribution:—

A DISPLAY AND DEMONSTRATION.

**"A HUNDRED YEARS OF SOUND RECORDING",
BY OUR MEMBERS J.N. CARRECK AND G.F.
COWAN. STAND NO. 102, MIDSUMMER FAIR,
ELTHAM COLLEGE, GROVE PARK ROAD,
MOTTINGHAM, LONDON, S.E.9. SATURDAY,
JULY 9 1977, OPENING AT 1.00 P.M.**

The College is ten minutes' walk from Mottingham Station (British Railways from Charing Cross), and the No. 126 'bus (London Transport), between Bromley and Eltham, passes the main gate. Access by car is via the A.20 and the turning from Eltham to Grove Park.

I'm quite out of touch with London meetings through heavy demands on my time for many years, but manage to attend many of the S.E. Branch meetings and restore machines.

I hope you're keeping well.

Yours sincerely,

John N. Carreck.

SOME MEMORIES FROM ALEC KIDD

In the last issue I referred to the death in January of an elderly member Cecil (Alec) Kidd of Essex. His last letter to me was never finished but sent on to me by his daughter who had managed to get him to sign his name on it, obviously with difficulty. It consists chiefly of an extract from an article in **The Star**, (a now defunct London evening paper), and one or two personal memories which I think readers will enjoy and will be helpful to the historian of forty years hence writing the centenary history of this Society.

Cecil Kidd writes:—

"You will be interested to read some details of the report about our Club which appeared in the issue of **The Star** for 28th December 1955. It was headed:

NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR OLD PHONOGRAPH RECORDS.

and continued as follows:—

'In these days of Television, V.H.F. Radio, De-luxe Radiograms, Cinemascope, Vista-Vision, etc. a London society is championing one of the earliest forms of mechanical entertainment in the Phonograph.

'Once a month members of the City of London Phonograph Society meet in a room above a public house at Curtain Road, Shore-ditch, to listen to recordings on cylinder and

disc.

'The Society was formed in 1919 in Holborn and its first Patron was Thomas A. Edison, who perfected in 1877 the most famous of his many inventions — the Phonograph. The Society's popularity has now spread beyond London and enthusiasts from places as far apart as Leigh-on-Sea and St. Albans attend monthly meetings.

'Most of the members collect their own phonograph cylinders, and the Society's President, Mr. Adrian Sykes, 67, of The Dell, Sandpit Lane, St. Albans, an inventor, has more than four hundred indestructible cylinders. "From many of the old wax cylinders I have made a matrix, pressed them by steam and so made a modern type disc." He says the clarity is not affected in any way.

'"Many of our members' old cylinder phonograph records are literally recreated by reproduction on our special electrical equipment," says the Society's Secretary Mr. R. H. Clark of High Road, Tottenham, "and the records sound as if they were recorded today instead of forty or more years ago".

'Another member, Mr. C. A. Kidd, 60, of Leigh-on-Sea, has a room at home which he calls his 'phonograph room', with shelves lined with hundreds of records. "Gramophone shops with whom I keep in touch write to me when they receive secondhand cylinder records," he says, "I recently bought a total of 117 of which 88 were still playable."

'One of the most enthusiastic of the Society's members is Mr. Rob Currie, known to millions as the Chairman of the B.B.C.'s **Palace of Varieties** broadcasts, who lives at Westcliff-on-Sea. 'As a youngster I learned my diction from Edison records, and I have been a phonograph enthusiast ever since," he says.

"I hope you will find room in your next article in the HILLANDALE NEWS for this extract from **The Star**," Cecil Kidd continues.

"It is most fortunate that I cut it out and pasted it in my 1955 diary as it is doubtful if there is another copy extant.

"Mr. R. H. Clark passed away in 1957 and I acquired a large share of his collection through the kind auspices of my friend, the late Gerry Annand.

"Adrian Sykes passed away a year or two later but I did not secure any part of his collection. I visited him on two occasions in his large country mansion at St. Albans."

+++++

At this point his letter stops.

+++++

George L. Frow.

PAPER AND THINGS by George Frow

The TORONTO STAR of February 26th carried a Phonograph Centenary article on the front page of its Entertainment section which included photographs of a local enthusiast's collection. The article I cannot really fault, it was a good piece of journalism of its sort and asserts that the Canadian Recording Industry Pavilion at the National Exhibition this summer will surpass anything the rest of the world will be mounting; I won't argue with this, but with the dates given to the FIRESIDE (1905) and HOME (1893) machine pictures which accompanied the article. Quoting the last figures on the patent plate of a machine is the pons asinorum that surely every serious collector should have traversed these days with the reference books available. When in doubt 'the nineties' or 'Edwardian' are at least on safe ground rather than stepping back too far into the quicksands of uncertainty. I criticise as one who has done this very thing when there just wasn't any documentation,

and hope this year that in whatever way we get involved in the Centenary, we get our facts right.

While on the Edison phonographs, Sydney H. Carter (██████████, Worthing, Sussex), tells me he is offering phosphor bronze half-nuts for the TRIUMPH at £1-50, and oak cabinet handles with fittings for the GEM, FIRESIDE and HOME machines for £1.

I think most of us will have bought up large collections of 78 records and wondered where to make a start disposing of the surplus to best advantage to attract wanted material in exchange. Allen G. Debus (██████████, Deerfield, Ill. 60015, United States) has gone to the trouble of typing out 50 sheets of records he has for disposal; a lot of these are of pre-1914 origin of continental and American origin. There are a few British labels, but quite a number of British performers. Edison and Pathé discs are well represented. Allen is anxious to exchange these records for American personalities who recorded in Britain, and mentions Grace La Rue, Ethel Levey, Elsie Janis, Jack Norworth, Gene Greene, Belle Baker, Marion Harris, Charlotte Greenwood, Ramon Navarro, Frank Tinney, Conrad Veidt, Bert Williams, the Astaires, certain Sophie Tuckers, and Berliners of the earlier generation; also British music hall. He really seeks the unusual on disc, which is easier to write than to define, but I think collectors will know what is meant. I have only the one list which I would be delighted to circulate to U.K. enquirers in rotation if they think they have this sort of record to offer, but I do ask that this list be kept moving around and not "sat on" as some have been. Members

outside Great Britain should contact Allen Debus direct if they think that something of mutual benefit could be derived; he regrets however that he cannot entertain matrix number enquiries.

The Society has bought some tie clips from the United States which carry the H.M.V./Victor trade mark of the dog and trumpet. Although this is Edison year rather than Berliner's, these tie-clips look well and perform a useful purpose. I am not a jeweller and can only describe them as having a matt gilt finish, and they are priced at £2-50 each, post paid. Your remittances please to our Treasurer. These not only keep the tie out of the soup but solve a birthday or Christmas present problem in advance, and should be mentioned to the wife or girl-friend. As a guide to prices, I recall paying about £4 for a plain bar polished gilt tie-clip a few months ago.

To end on a local note, it has taken until the Phonograph Centenary for the road that passes my home to adopt another Edison development — an electric lighting system — and as this is written gangs are putting in modern posts and cables, and in a few weeks the old gas lamps will be dismantled and probably sold overseas for an outrageous sum, and the present rather ill-lit road will become another 'ribbon of light' that we have existed quite well without for a very long time. Luckily in anticipation, we have long had a gas lamp in captivity in the garden, though lit by electricity. Shame!

CARRIE TUBB, AND, GRAMOPHONE
COMPANY RECORDINGS
— by Frank Andrews.

December 1976's issue of the Hillandale

News carried an article and discography by my good friend and Honorary Member of the Society, Len (Pathé) Watts.

In this, besides detailing Tubbs' Pathé recordings, Len also listed a number of her Gramophone Company issues, admitting that he was not in possession of the whole of her output for that Company. I have researched the Gramophone Company recordings since and offer the following, also admitting that I am not sure that my list covers all of the discs issued.

I have heard from another correspondent that Miss Carrie Tubb also recorded for the Aeolian Company, Ltd. or the Vocalion Gramophone Co. Ltd., or both, but as I have no lists of these companies I cannot supply details. I hope to be in a position to include them at the end of this article.

Carrie Tubb's Gramophone & Typewriter, Ltd., and Gramophone Company' Ltd.'s issued recordings:—

GRAMOPHONE CONCERT RECORDS, 10 ins.
single sided (G. & T's).

3668 "The Dairymaids" (L. Williams) — The Sandow Girl (probably issued late 1906).

3669 "The Dairymaids" (L. Williams) — Hullol Little Stranger (probably issued late 1906).

3701 "The Yeomen of the Guard" (Gilbert & Sullivan) — When Maiden Loves. (Recorded by Fred Gaisberg, matrix 9992b, between Dec. 1906 and March 1907). Issued later by the Gramophone Company, Ltd. on "His Master's Voice" B.404).

4417 "Elijah" (Mendelssohn) — Lift thine eyes. (With E. Jones-Hudson, F. Venning, and E. Pike) (Issued circa 1906/7). Issued later by the Gramophone Co. Ltd. on "His Master's Voice" B.385.

GRAMOPHONE MONARCH RECORDS,
12 ins. single sided (G. & T's).

04003 "Elijah" (Mendelssohn) — Oh Lord, Thou hast Overthrown. (with P. Dawson). (Recorded by Fred Gaisberg, matrix 987c, between December 1906 and March 1907). Issued later by the Gramophone Co. Ltd.

on "His Master's Voice" C.484.

04024 Hymn of Praise — I Waited for The Lord. (Mendelssohn) (with P. Allen). (issued circa 1908, later on "His Master's Voice" C.458).

"HIS MASTER'S VOICE" 12 ins. single sided (Gram. Co., Ltd.).

03278 "The Valley of Laughter" (Sanderson). (Recorded by Hancox, matrix No. Ac6177f, in 1912).

Issued later on "His Master's Voice" C.447.

**MISS CARRIE TUBB'S RECORDING
ENGINEERS AND LOOSE DATING.**

Perhaps you are wondering how I have been able to name two of the recording engineers and the period in which they took their recordings of three of the titles listed above?

Enter upon the scene Messrs. Alan Kelly, John F. Perkins and John Ward, plus one of our Honorary Vice Presidents, Mr. James F. E. Dennis.

Mr. Dennis, as many members will know, is Editor and Publisher of a monthly magazine called "The Record Collector", devoted mainly to those who collect and are interested in vocal recordings of operatic arias and songs of the more serious character. However, in his double issue of May, 1976, Vol. XXIII, Nos. 3 & 4, he devoted most of his magazine to the subject of "On Gramophone Company Matrix Numbers, 1898 to 1921" compiled by Kelly, Perkins and Ward.

It was with the aid of this article, which is a tremendous achievement, that I have been able to give the information concerning Carrie Tubb's records. I strongly recommend all members to procure a copy of this particular issue, as it marks a landmark in research into the Gramophone Company, Limited's early acoustic period.

There are several unanswered questions remaining and a number of minor mysteries to be explained, but the general basis of the work will remain unaltered for many years to come, and with its aid, one can approximately

date any Gramophone Company issue in one's collection, within the time period covered, which includes Zonophone Records, The Twin Double Sided Records, and The "Cinch" Records. This can be done from the schedules given at the end of the article proper, which show each recording engineer's ledger numbers and the locations and the dates when recordings were there taken, that is to say, the period of time covered and not the individual daily recording sessions.

The bulk of the article will not be easy to read, especially if matrix numbers and code letters and numbers have been of no interest to you hitherto, but don't let that deter you. Obtain a copy, glance through it first, note the headings and sub-headings, get the "feel" of the article, and then read it through two or three times. You will surprise yourself how quickly you will grasp what the authors have demonstrated. A great help will be to pull out various early discs from your collection and try finding them and dating them by the matrix numbers given in the schedules. All sizes, (5, 7, 10 and 12 inches diameter discs) and all "makes", viz.: "Berliner", Zonophone Record, Gramophone Record, Gramophone Concert Record, Gramophone Monarch Record, The Twin Double-Sided Disc Record, Zonophone Record, "The Twin", Zonophone Celebrity Record, Zonophone Grand Opera Record, The "Cinch" Record, and "His Master's Voice" can be used to "test" the authors' project.

I would here like to congratulate all three authors on their achievement and Mr. Dennis for being courageous enough to devote an issue of his magazine to such an article, which is of benefit to all record collectors generally and not just to those who limit themselves to "recorded vocal art".

As an example of what can be done, I have just withdrawn four discs from my shelves to discover what I may from the article in question.

Gram. Concert 2-2651; -1905G. This is a Fred Gaisberg recording of Mr. Andrew Black and is so early, about April 1902, that the disc was made before the allocation of his suffixes, "a", "b" and "c" in 1904, which distinguished Fred Gaisberg's 7", 10" and 12" recordings from then on. The recording venue was London.

"His Master's Voice" B.312, 4-2269; y16294e. In this matrix number we find that the suffix "e" means that it comes within Will Gaisberg's 10" series, but the "y" prefix denies that W. Gaisberg did the recording and that it was the work of Arthur S. Clarke, entering up his London recording in the Will Gaisberg series. Without an "e" as a suffix, the matrix number would have been an Arthur S. Clarke recording taken in Smyrna in 1910, with "y" as a suffix. As it is, the schedule gives Will Gaisberg's ledger dating for 16249e as between 1908 to 1916, for the series covered by those two dates ran from 9233e to 19700e. One hopes that this block will eventually be sub-divided into yearly or half-yearly sections. The record is by Thorpe Bates and is probably from a 1912 recording.

The Twin Double Sided Disc Record No. 90, T2087, 9416e. This is another Will C. Gaisberg recording, and as the matrix number 9416e comes near to his London recording session which began at 9233e after November 1908, this effort is almost certainly a 1909 recording, perhaps 1910.

"Cinch" Record 3041; X42766: 8176e. Another Will C. Gaisberg recording, but of an earlier period. Numbers 8035e to 8505e were recorded in London between April and June, inclusive, in 1908. Seeing that "Cinch" Records were not put on sale before September, 1913, one can appreciate what good use record companies made of their old matrices and stampers!!

"The Record Collector is obtainable from Mr. J. F. E. Dennis at [redacted] Ipswich, Suffolk. The annual subscription for 12 issues is £4, but it is most likely that

Mr. Dennis will provide individual copies of this May 1976 issue as it is a unique production. More power to the elbows of Messrs. Kelly, Perkins and Ward, and to such as Mr. Dennis for making such information available to record collectors everywhere.

And a word of praise to our own Editor, (who chooses not to ignore my own efforts, for which I thank him), for the consistently high standard he retains in the organisation and production of our "Hillandale News". I would like to wish him a Happy New Year on behalf of myself and, with your permission, every other member of our Society who looks forward to the next issue of the "Hillandale News" with the same eagerness as I.

My thanks are due to Mr. Aurian Hindle-Briscall for the following details of Carrie Tuub's Vocalion Records, all issued during 1922.

C-01083 "Otello" — The Willow Song (Verdi) (issued 1922).

D-02075 "Songs My Mother Taught Me (Dvorak).

"The Orchard by the Sea (H. Oliver)".

Both with Herbert Dawson, piano acc.

D-02080 "Songs of Old London" — Down Vauxhall Way (H. Oliver).

"Songs of Old London" — The Nightingales of Lincoln's Inn (H. Oliver).

D-02089 "Songs of Old London" — Buy My Strawberries (H. Oliver).

"The Dancing Lesson" (Herbert Oliver).

The last two discs had orchestral accompaniments. The above may not be the complete list of Miss Tuub's Vocalion recordings.

REVIEW OF SCANDINAVIAN — AMERICAN DISCOGRAPHY by Pekka Gronow.

I have recently received a copy of a catalogue entitled "Studies in Scandinavian —

American Discography" by Pekka Gronow.

It is a volume of 112 pages listing all Finnish records issued by the Victor and Edison Companies in the USA, as well as the total known Scandinavian output of Odeon/Okeh, Brunswick, Vocalion and some minor labels — this volume also includes the author's previous "American Columbia Scandinavian 'E' and 'F' Series listing all known Finnish-American records up to the 1940s."

This is an extremely well produced clearly printed paperback filled with a wealth of information including record labels and advertisements which is a "must" for most matrix collectors throughout the world and an important addition to the collection of all American collectors. The first section of this catalogue devotes itself to a potted history of the Victor "Foreign" records which includes sources of information and a useful Bibliography.

The potted history continues with similar information regarding the other record companies mentioned earlier.

A splendid and useful document which can be obtained from:—

PEKKA GRONOW,

00140 HELSINKI 14/08,
FINLAND,

at only £2 including p.p.

B.B.

HOMOPHONE RECORDS IN BRITAIN by Frank Andrews

I have recently begun an attempt to list the Homophone Records which were part of the Homophone British catalogues and supplements between 1906 and 1914.

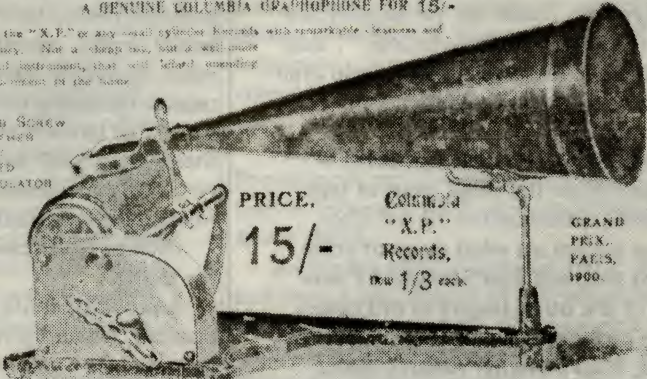
Originally issued without catalogue numbers common to both sides of the double sided discs (which were available also as single sided discs), I am, for the present, concentrating on these double sided discs after they had been
(to page 146)

New Columbia Graphophone.

A GENUINE COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE FOR 15/-

Plays the "X.P." or any small cylinder Records with remarkable clearness and brilliancy. Not a cheap toy, but a well-made musical instrument, that will afford unending entertainment in the home.

1948
FEED SCREW
L. 271428
24.7
V. FED
REGULATOR



PRICE, 15/-

Columbia
"X.P." Records,
NEW 1/3 each.

GRAND
PRIZ.
PARIS,
1900.

COLUMBIA PHONOGRAPH Co., Genl.,
80, GREAT EASTERN STREET, LONDON, E.C.

NEW YORK, N.Y. HOLLAND STRAAT 14

The Columbia Graphophone advertisement appeared in *The London Magazine* for November 1903. Imhof & Mühle were still advertising musical boxes with Herliker's disc gramophone in *Harmonies Magazine*, May 1901 (below) but three years later in *The London Magazine*, only orchestrons and player-pianos were mentioned along with HMV gramophones (right).

THE GRAMOPHONE.

THE WONDER
OF THE
TWENTIETH
CENTURY.




(Herliker's Patent)
Loudest and most
diverse sound - pro-
ducing music con-
tinuously. Goes for
thousands. Records
destroyed practically in-
destructible. Loud
enough to fill a hall.
Building too simple
of construction. Four
Gramophone excels all our
saxophone. We find it
magnificent in the opinion of
Hundreds of Records to
choose from. Records sent
on approval if postage
paid.

Price £5 10s.
Records 2.6 each.

Length of Trumpet, 18 inches.
Imhof's Patent ORCHESTRIONS without Bards.
Patent ELECTRIC PIANOS.
Patent REGINA MUSICAL BOX, changing
its tunes automatically.
Patent STELLA MUSICAL BOX, discs without
projections.
POLYPHON MUSICAL BOXES in all Sizes.
TEN GOLD MEDALS.
By Appointment to Her Late Majesty THE QUEEN.
Send for Illustrated List (Free).
IMHOF & MÜHLE, 110a, New Oxford St., London, W.

GRAMOPHONES

FROM 3 GUINEAS TO £20.
The New No. 3, in Oak Case, £3 3s.
wonderfully clear and natural in tone. Records
on approval if remittance sent with order for
quantity required. Prices: 2.6, 5/- and 10/- each.



"THIS MASTER'S VOICE"

Thousands of Records by Madame Lavey,
Caruso, Kubelick, Moe, Kirkby, Luan, Sarah
Bernhardt, Ben Davies, Grandfather Gaudy,
Haydn Quartette, Dan Lano, Mrs. Robey, &c.
Illustrated List (FREE). Gradual Payments.
Makers of Electric Orchestrons, Pianos and
Piano-Players, &c. By Appointment to the late
Queen Victoria. **IMHOF & MÜHLE,**
110, New Oxford Street,
London, W.

given catalogue numbers

The 10 ins. diameter discs catalogue numbers range from No. 1 to at least No. 1096, perhaps higher, so I have not yet determined what, and how many, "Blank Entries" I shall be left with when my investigations into available sources have been completed, but "Blank Entries" I shall have.

In the meantime I have the problem of trying to determine the voice range of two of the operatic artists on the 10 ins. discs. Can anyone inform me what range of voice Betsy Schot had, and Elsa Szamosy? I have the ranges of the other singers in this category which include Rudolph Berger, Romeo Berti, Oscar Braun, Werner Alberti, Marie Dietrich, Gaston Dubois, René Dubois, René Fournets, Franz Gautier, Martino Gros(so), Rudolph Hager, Dinh Gilly, Carl Nebe, Franz Porten, Juan Raventos, Edoardo Sottolana, Ida von Schmeele-Muller, Hedwig Zimmer and Paolo Zocchi.

Homophone Records Nos. 321 & 322 have four pieces from "Lohengrin", sung by a tenor, in German, but I do not know who the artist was. Can anyone help on this? The pieces are "Gralserzahlung" on two sides of 321, and on 322 are "Mein Lieber Schwan!" and "Lohengrin's Abschied". As I have not a Bauer, I cannot check through for any of my queries, but I can tell you that the Lohengrin sides were issued, in England, in 1907. Who is the soprano on No. 283 with two arias from "Mignon"?

Neither "The Record Collector" nor "The Golden Age Recorded", published by the Oakwood Press, give any mention at all to the above singers, so perhaps they have been allocated to the "rubbish pile", which is the fate of all other types of recordings which have not met with the approval of the "afficionados of vocal art", recordings which, within their own spheres, can be adjudged the equal, artistically, of efforts by artists in the operatic field. By what right have some writers, dealing with opera singers, decided that all other fields of

recording in the whole repertoire are "rubbish"? From my reading of such writers it is my opinion that although they might have known what they were talking about when discussing actual singers, operas and performances, when it came to writing about records as regards recording dates, issue dates, the history of labels and companies in general, they have a great deal to answer for in the way they have guessed at things and disseminated false information.

Back to Homophone Records (I feel better for that!).

A provisional list of "Blank Entries" is possible, which I give herewith and which concerns the first half of the catalogue. The numbers are:— 237, 238, 261 to 265, 268, 278 to 284, 287 to 289, 304, 313, 317, 321 to 327, 339, 340, 343, 352 to 355, 445, 448 to 450, 475, 494, & 515. Records of anonymous singers are included in these numbers with arias from "La Traviata" and "Carmen". I have no further details.

All records with these numbers would have been issued before the summer of 1909. If anyone can supply details to any of the aforementioned numbers or can inform where Homophone Catalogues or Supplements for the years 1907, 1908 and 1909 might be perused, I would be most grateful.

Please send to me what you have, to [redacted]

[redacted] Neasden, N.W.10.

THE EARLY TALKING MACHINE SOCIETY MOVEMENT AND LETTERS TO EDITORS.

By Frank Andrews

PART I.

I dealt with the founding of the first Talking Machine Societies in the December 1975 issue of the Hillandale News, No. 87, pages 415 and 416.

As far as I can gather, the first three Societies formed were:— (1) North-West

London Phonograph & Gramophone Society — June 1911, (2) West London Phonograph & Gramophone Society, (3) North London Phonograph & Gramophone Society — December 1911.

There had formerly been isolated instances where talking machine enthusiasts had formed clubs and associations, often at their places of employment, the Prudential Assurance Company, Ltd. having one such club*, but these were in no way connected with the Society movement which came into being in 1911, due, in great measure, to the efforts and encouragement of the first President of our own later Society, Mr. Adrian F. Sykes, B.Sc.

(I would here like to correct a "lapse of memory" mistake of mine published in *Hillandale News* of August 1976, page 17, where I credit Mr. Henry Seymour with being the founder of the Society movement! My only excuse is that, in my mind, Sykes and Seymour were "the terrible twins" of the talking machine enthusiasts and I find it very easy to confuse the two without checking my references. Sykes was the founder of the Society Movement - not Seymour!).

During 1912 the Society Movement expanded, meetings reports from the various Societies were published in "The Sound Wave" and "The Talking Machine News", and it is through reading these reports that one can discover many items which assist in filling in gaps in the history of the talking machine as we have it at present, and gain an understanding of the attitude which the more aware sections of the record buying public had towards the products being offered by the manufacturers.

As our Society, at its inception, had strong links with the North London Society, I propose to use mostly that Society's reports to reveal to present members the climate of opinion which prevailed in those days. One other good reason for using the North London

Society is the fact that both Seymour and Sykes were members. Other Societies had their own eminent men, some connected with the Edison, Pathé and Columbia companies operating in Britain. The Society movement appears to have been unique to Britain, there was nothing comparable to it in the United States of America.

The third meeting of the North London Phonograph and Gramophone Society was held in February 1912, and reported upon in March 1912.

During the early months of 1912, there had been a fair amount of correspondence over the question of the best materials from which to make diaphragms. Mr. C. R. W. Miles, one of the first officers of our Society when formed in 1919, had written on the subject with reference to a wooden diaphragm, and this was referred to by Mr. W. E. Thomas of Winchmore Hill, N. in July 1912, as follows:

"Dear Sir, — Referring to the letter in your May issue, signed by Mr. C. R. W. Miles, I beg to state that I also have had an opportunity of testing these diaphragms. Mr. Miles is quite correct in stating that soprano voices appear to great advantage by using this diaphragm, the tone having none of the objectionable nasal qualities which are noticeable with ordinary diaphragms. In instrumental records the true type of note is preserved, and the style in detail of different performers is recognisable. At a distance, the tone is as musical and distinct as in front of the trumpet. In orchestral pieces, in instrumental combination, the true type of note is faithfully rendered.

"I understand that the wood is treated by the 'Strad' process, which has been practically re-discovered after lengthy experiments with violins, pianos and other musical instruments, as well as gramophones."

Correspondence continued on the subject which in September 1912 resulted in letters

being published from Adrian F. Sykes, Honorary Secretary of the North London Society, and from Mr. R. P. Wykes, founder of the Northants Talking Machine Society. I append both letters in full.

EXPERIMENTS IN DIAPHRAGMS.

The Arcade Emporium, Northampton.

Dear Sir,—On seeing various articles in the trade papers lately about diaphragms, I have been experimenting on different materials with the "Exhibition" sound-box ("H.M.V." machine). I am rather inclined to prefer vegetable matter to metal, especially on orchestral selections. The first thing I tried was bread crust, which was rather hard to fit, as it required to be so thin that there was not enough substance to hold. However, I managed to fit it by using a little varnish outside, and the result was fairly good; although not very loud it was a very sweet tone. I next tried cardboard, cut out of an ordinary linen post-card, which was much better, especially on reed instruments; this gives a perfect tone, although not quite so loud as mica. Mr. S. Gibson, of 75, Bailiff Street, Northampton, has also been trying a great many materials. He has an Edison "Standard" phonograph, fitted with the Edison Model "O" reproducer and Cygnet horn, and is a very enthusiastic member of the Northants Talking Machine Society. He brought his model "O" reproducer down to me, in which he had fitted a cardboard diaphragm, also made out of an ordinary post-card, but in this case he put two thicknesses stuck together, and which he had put under a special process known only to himself. I tried it on my machine, and was surprised with the results; it came out almost as loud as copper, but more distinct, with a sweeter tone, and no metallic sound about it whatever; it is really a great improvement. Both the reproducer and sound-box were tried and tested at the meeting of the Northants Talking Machine Society on August 12, and proved most satisfactory in every way. Should your readers wish for further particulars, Mr. Gibson or myself will be pleased to supply same.—Yours faithfully,
R. P. WYKES.

New Barnet.

Dear Sir,—I confess that the letter on wood diaphragms in your last issue has moved me to

protest. As usual, the devotee of the new material cuts the ground from beneath his feet by condemning the conventional methods in unmistakable terms. Whether or no wood, prepared or otherwise, makes a good diaphragm, as diaphragms of that nature go, I am not concerned, such things being very much a matter of opinion. The statement I wish to contradict is that soprano voices have objectionable nasal qualities when reproduced by ordinary diaphragms. I know not whether a disc machine or phonograph is understood, but the phonograph is implied from circumstances. Sir, if the details I have for so long insisted upon are observed, namely, Cygnet horn, copper diaphragm, and last, but not least, 160 r.p.m., no such effect is obtained. Winchmore Hill is not very remote from New Barnet. Would your correspondent honour me with a visit to hear some of the soprano work of the Edison Company on an ordinary diaphragm? I feel that statements of the nature referred to tend to discredit the wonderfully fine instruments of the Edison Company at 10, 18, or 40 guineas, which are fitted with ordinary diaphragms, or rather extraordinary ones. One more point and I have finished. For many years numerous correspondents have striven to obtain better music recorded, and I think that the general tendency, as far as cylinders are concerned, is towards better titles. I cannot understand, therefore, why every high class title is not accorded a place in the "Pick of the Basket." One would think that the "Sound Wave" would be doing a good work by encouraging the use of such records, and, in any case, the matter reviewed in preference, apart from the concert records, ill accords with the exclusive advertisement of so fine a machine as the "Opera."

ADRIAN F. SYKES, B.Sc.

The Northants Talking Machine Society had been formed in April 1912. Mr. C. Cozens, of Cosall, near Wolverhampton was appealing for others to join him in the formation of a Wolverhampton Talking Machine Society. This was formed in September 1912.

(To be continued).

* May 1904 — Fifteen years before the Society was formed.—F.A.

A Phonograph Club—A Phonograph Club has been formed amongst those associated with the Prudential

Assurance Company, and a dinner was recently held at the Haunch of Venison, Bell Yard, Fleet Street, presided over by G. Bush Fordham, Esq. About fifty members were present. The musical part of the evening's entertainment included a record competition, in which the members played their best records upon their own machines. Mr. Whitcomb was awarded the first prize for the comic song, Mary had a Little Lamb, Edison-Bell record; and Mr. A. E. Furniss for the banjo solo, Darkie's Dawn, also an Edison-Bell record. Mr. Furniss was a prizewinner for the bell solo, Butterfly Gavotte (Edison); Mr. Glasscock took a prize for the sentimental song, Down Deep in the Cellar (Edison); and Mr. Rollason was successful with the band selection, Blaze Away March (Edison). The greatest interest was taken in this novel contest, and a most enjoyable evening was spent, the proceedings terminating with the usual vote of thanks to the artistes and chairman. We are informed that in a previous contest of this kind the Edison-Bell records took five prizes out of a possible six.

"IN THY BOOK RECORD THEIR GROANS" (Milton)

by George Frow

Reading one of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "Tales of Mystery" the other day set me thinking that the talking machine hasn't yet made the mark in popular writing that, say, the steam engine made in Victorian literature, particularly among writers from Dickens downwards. Compendia of verse and short stories written about trains and railway journeys can be readily purchased — not so the gramophone or phonograph. Of course the steam train has been round for half as long again, and is formidable or lovable from any angle depending on whether you like them or not, but it is difficult to recall many writings where the talking machine has played much of a part. True, actors in period television plays are inclined to put records on the things without lowering the needle, and lo and behold, the sound still comes forth even if the doors at the front are closed.

In Conan Doyle's story "The Japped Box", a wealthy widower Sir John Bellamore

retires to his turret study, a sanctum that none but an elderly servant who cleans it, ever visits, and from which a mysterious woman's voice is heard nightly by the servants. It turns out of course that the japped box contains a small phonograph and Bellamore retires there to hear again the voice of his dying wife. A touching story indeed, and by no means the only one on this theme; I cannot date it because it is outside the only biography of Doyle that I have, but his turret study had electric light, and the Thing — the phonograph — that he draws out of the japped box is referred to as "something squat and uncouth"; even after a couple of light ales would the most perfervid Edison enthusiast speak thus of a PUCK?

The early Edison publications relate experiences people had at the time of hearing strange recorded voices and being 'taken in' to thinking them real, something we might and do do in these hi-fi days, but it stretches the imagination greatly to think of anyone confusing the acoustic talking machine with the real voice, however well recorded. It may well be that people were a little more simple then, and none the worse for it, but have not supernatural experiences decreased as electricity began to illuminate the dark corners?

This is intended to lead to the point that it is hard to think of a major literary work in which the central character is a gramophone. Recorded voices have quite a lot to do with the plot in a few plays and films, such as Agatha Christie's "Ten Little Niggers", and in "The Cat and the Canary" and the 1945 film of the "Beast with Five Fingers" — a hidden Edison STANDARD Phonograph in this one, and in my youth there were a number of B grade mystery movies with recorded messages cut on 78 discs, a cumbersome process then even with the Victor Home Recording of 1930 onwards.

Would not "The Talking Machine and its place in Literature" be an acceptable subject for a discourse in one of our lesser-known and redder-bricked universities? There can't be many subjects left for theses at today's rate of consumption, and here is one that the Officers of the Society would be happy to adjudicate.

FELIX SYKES

Another Society link with the past was broken at the end of February with the death of Felix Sykes, reported by Sydney H. Carter. He was a brother of Adrian Sykes, the Society's first President who died in the late fifties, and was one of the early Society members, taking over as Recording Secretary in mid-1922.

I only ran across him once, at Sydney Carter's Exhibition at Worthing some ten years ago, when he showed an agile mind and a greater grasp of Edison recording personnel than anyone I remember meeting. Since then he has drawn more and more into himself, a great pity really and a regrettable loss of his experience of our hobby to ourselves and those who follow.

Felix Sykes's Recording Secretary notes for most of the twenties have been appearing in HILLANDALE NEWS through Frank Andrews' researches, and these at least give us some impression of the earlier years of the Society and will be all that most of us ever knew of this shy man.

George Frow

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